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ABSTRACT

The 14 papers in this collection all deal with 20th century journalism and journalists in the United States. The papers and their authors are: "Educating Ike: The Evolution of Presidential PR in 1953" (David W. Guth); "Crumbs from the Publishers' Golden Tables: The Plight of the Chicago Newsboy" (Jon Bekken); "'They Work Too Hard': How Newspapers Justified the 1924 Exclusion of Japanese Immigrants" (Brad Hamm); "Agnes Smedley: A Radical Journalist in Search of a Cause" (Karla Gower); "The Camera's Red Lens: Television Coverage of Wounded Knee II, 1973" (William Hewitt); "From College Expulsion to Pulitzer Prize: How the New York World-Telegram's Fred Woltman Became the 'No. 1 Newspaper Specialist' on Communists" (Brad Hamm); "The Segregationist Press in the Closed Society: The Jackson Daily News' Coverage of the Civil Rights Movement, 1960-1964" (David R. Davies); "A 'Political Institutional' Theory of the News: The Emergence of Independent Journalism in Detroit, 1865-1920" (Richard L. Kaplan); "Will Irwin Revisited: A Contrast of Past and Present Criticisms of the Press" (Brian C. Smith); "Returning Government to the Hands of the People: The Pacific Northwest's Nonpartisan League Newspapers" (Mary M. Cronin and Paul Schlienz); "Birth Control Crusade: The Public Relations Campaign" (R. Brooks Garner); "AIDS and the Gay Press: Uncovering or Covering Up?" (Rodger Streitmatter); "The Farmer and the Radio Man Should Be Friends: Clear Channel Radio Stations and the Farm Lobby, 1941-1968" (James C. Foust); and "Electrical Transcriptions: Quality Programming for All Radio Stations" (Jann Hyde). (NKA)

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Part II

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Educating Ike:
The Evolution of Presidential PR in 1953

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Abstract
Educating Ike: The Evolution of President PR in 1953

Dwight D. Eisenhower had confidence in his ability to communicate his vision for America when he assumed the presidency in January 1953. By December 1953, Eisenhower's confidence was still there, but the way his White House chose to communicate with the electorate was changing. During his first year in office, Eisenhower had to cope with the transition from being a military leader to a political leader. His administration was struggling with how best to use the relatively new medium of television to its advantage. And he was frustrated by the ability of Senator Joseph McCarthy to seize the public agenda and force the administration into a defensive posture. These challenges forced changes in White House public relations. This paper argues that, by year's end, Eisenhower administration communication efforts were evolving from Hunt and Grunig's public information model of public relations to their two-way asymmetric model of public relations -- i.e. from a more reactive to a more proactive approach. This transformation may have eventually occurred over a period of time. However, the paper argues that the November 1953 disclosure that Eisenhower's predecessor may have knowingly appointed a suspected Soviet spy to a sensitive government post ignited a political fire storm that hastened these changes -- changes that influence the conduct of presidential public relations to this very day.

Educating Ike: The Evolution of Presidential PR in 1953

Imagine what it is like to be an international hero, a proclaimed savior of civilization. Also imagine the confidence one gains after receiving an overwhelming affirmation of popular support by being elected President of the United States. For Dwight David Eisenhower, this was his reality at the start of 1953. Having led a coalition of nations to victory on the battlefield just a few years earlier, Eisenhower was now about to embark upon leadership of the Free World in the midst of the Cold War. Having enjoyed so much success in such a relatively short period of time, it is easy to understand why the man known to millions as "Ike" expected that success to continue.

By the end of the year, Eisenhower had undergone an education by fire. Although still a supremely self-confident man, he had learned that the old ways of doing things did not work in his new environment. As a military leader, he and the journalists had been on the "same side." As a political leader, his relationship with reporters was more adversarial. Although he was the first Republican president in two decades, that did not earn him the automatic cooperation of a Republican-dominated Congress. And the tools of mass communication were changing. His Democratic predecessors, most notably Roosevelt, had effectively used the new mass medium of radio. Now there was yet another new mass medium, television, toward which Eisenhower was at first ambivalent and, by year's end, would come to embrace.

This paper is about the evolution of public relations during the first year of the Eisenhower administration. Its purpose is two-fold, to use theoretical models of public relations to illustrate changes that occurred in the conduct of public relations and to demonstrate that a single event, a controversy involving a dead and obscure government official, hastened this evolution.

Models of Public Relations

Cutlip, Center and Broom have identified four public relations role models based upon the functions practitioners perform. Their four models are: *the communication technician,* a non-manager concerned with the preparation of communications; *the communication facilitator,* a mediator concerned with maintaining two-way communication; *the problem-solving process facilitator,* a collaborator who works with other managers to solve problems, and *the expert-prescriber,* a definer of problems and implementer of solutions.[1] Although these models are well-suited for describing the role of an individual, such as a press secretary, they do not work as well when attempting to characterize the actions of an organization, i.e. the Eisenhower administration. That is because the unit of analysis upon which the Cutlip, Center and Broom models are based is the individual.

Hunt and Grunig have developed four public relations role models that are better suited for describing the actions of organizations. That is because the unit of analysis which makes up these models is the flow of communications, regardless of the number of practitioners involved. The four Hunt and Grunig models are: *the press agent/publicity model,* where the practitioner serves as a propagandist; *the public information model,* the one-way dissemination of information; *the two-way symmetric model,* where practitioners serve as mediators between the organization and its publics; and *the two-way asymmetric model,* where there is two-way communication with an emphasis upon persuasion.[2]

By all appearances, the Eisenhower administration followed the public information model of public relations when it took power in January 1953. Hunt and Grunig note that it is the public information model that is most typically used in government public relations efforts. As they write, organizations using this model often rely upon a "journalist in residence" to communicate objective information. In many ways, this is an ad hoc approach to public relations, one based less on research and more on a desire to influence public opinion.[3] The "journalist in residence" of the Eisenhower administration was James C. Hagerty, who served as presidential press secretary during Eisenhower's two terms in office. Hagerty had been a reporter for *The New York Times* from 1934 until 1942, serving the last four years as a legislative correspondent in the newspaper's Albany bureau. From 1943 until 1952, Hagerty served New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey, first as executive assistant and later as press secretary. It was from this association that Hagerty became involved in the Eisenhower presidential campaign in 1952.[4]

Eisenhower saw great value in public relations. As Stephen E. Ambrose has written, the ability to communicate was one of Eisenhower's basic principles of leadership.[5] Some insights into Eisenhower's attitude comes from the notes of Ann C. Whitman, the president's personal secretary. Following a September 28, 1953, White House staff meeting, she wrote:

> "He (the President) then spoke of the value of public relations. He never believed in the theory that public relations could be handled by one man - public relations is a matter for the entire group. It must come up directly or indirectly in every staff meeting. He said "public relations is nothing in the world but getting ideas put out in such a way that your purpose is actually understood by all people that need to understand it in order to get it done efficiently and well." He said each day everyone of group must get some new idea on how the public relations idea can be sold to the country. Here is an activity with which each member of group is vitally concerned. In this, the adage is correct "an ounce of prevention or preparation is certainly better than a pound of cure." If we all get our imaginations working, he feels that we will see considerable improvement in relations with the public and the country. To the country to Department heads we must bring the composite of experience of experts in presentation of facts before the public."[6]

There is evidence that Eisenhower was wary of many of the strategies employed by public relations practitioners. During the 1952 campaign, he was quoted as saying that he wanted nothing to do with so-called public relations gimmicks, such as contrived campaign statements. "The people who listen to me want to know what I think -- not what I think about what someone else thinks," Eisenhower said.[7] However, this wariness did not keep the General from going along with script writers who were telling him what he believed and should say in his television spot advertisements. During one filming session, a writer reported that Eisenhower shook his head and said, "To think that an old soldier should come to this."[8]

However important Eisenhower viewed the practice of public relations, it was an obscure subject to many others within the White House. On the day after

Eisenhower spoke to his staff, Commerce Under Secretary Walter Williams led a staff discussion about the coordination of public relations efforts. That session prompted Whitman to write in her diary, "For whatever it is worth, the whole business worried me because it sounded so fascist - you think this way, you say this in answer to that, etc."[9]

Balance the president's view of public relations with his view of the press. Although Ike understood the role reporters play in a democracy, he saw them as a group as "far from being as important as they themselves consider."[10] He also took what they wrote at face value. "I have seen, when they occurred, the actual incidents reported, or I have understood the motives of individuals written about," Eisenhower wrote in his diary. "Rarely is such writing accurate."[11]

Despite these feelings, Eisenhower felt the media were important enough "to insure that much government time is consumed in courting favor with them and in dressing up ideas and programs so that they look as saleable as possible."[12] Nor was it his style to confront journalists, either. As his private papers indicate, Ike's complaints about reporters and their stories were usually limited to his correspondence with close friends.

Eisenhower's views of public relations and journalism appear to be consistent with the Hunt and Grunig public information model. The communication appears to be one-way, from the source (the government) to the receiver (the electorate). The goal was the dissemination of truthful information.[13] The prevailing view of the president at the start of his administration appears to have been: armed with the right information, the public will make the right choices.

Forces For Change

Between Inauguration Day and early November, there were a number of forces at work that were to change the administration's approach toward public relations. At the outset of the administration, public relations wasn't a matter of great urgency. President Eisenhower enjoyed immense popularity, with a Gallup approval rating ranging between 67 - 74 percent during his first seven months in office.[14] Craig Allen has noted that public communication was not a high priority early in the administration. Instead, the focus was upon internal and legislative communications.[15] It wasn't until February 17, nearly a month after taking the oath of office, that the president conducted his first radio and press conference.[16]

As late as October 30, the administration discussed a reduction of government public information services. At a cabinet meeting on that date, the president "emphasized the need for quality rather than quantity" and asked the cabinet "to review the numbers and functions of these people with a view to reducing the quantity." Agriculture Secretary Ezra Taft Benson agreed with the president, saying that a study of department public information activities by "disinterested outsiders" will "probably result in a personnel reduction of 33%."[17]

Nevertheless, pressures for changing the way it communicated with the public were building upon the White House. One force for change was the realization of the differences between Eisenhower's relationship with journalists during the war and now as president. Both Ambrose and Allen have written that, as a military leader, Eisenhower had always advocated on behalf of someone else's policies. As president, he was forced to defend his own policies. Ambrose also wrote that "all of the reporters were on his side as a general, but as President he faced a press corps of which at least half the working members were Democrats."[18] And as Allen notes, the size of the Washington press corps made it difficult for Ike to have the informal relationships with individual reporters he had enjoyed during the war.[19]

Another force for change was television. Eisenhower's team believed that television could do for Ike the same thing radio did for Franklin Roosevelt -- make the president an overpowering presence in American life. Eisenhower's 1952 campaign had established important precedents in its use. Although the nominee continued the tradition of whistle-stop campaigning, he also adopted an aggressive television strategy. Because Eisenhower had been a well-known national figure for a decade, his strategists chose to concentrate on selectively targeted regional spot advertising in the three weeks preceding the election.[20] They also engineered an elaborate telecast that one writer said reduced the traditional election-eve candidate's speech to being "a relic from Model-T days."[21]

Television figured prominently in the campaign's defining moment. Stung by criticism of an alleged campaign slush fund, vice presidential nominee Richard M. Nixon took to the airwaves September 23, 1952, and delivered a speech that probably saved his political career, the so-called "Checkers Speech." After Nixon's

30-minute nationally televised address was completed, Eisenhower is reported to have told Republican National Committee Chairman Arthur Summerfield, who paid for the television time, "Well, Arthur, you certainly got your $75,000 worth tonight!"[22]

With the coming of the new administration, Eisenhower's advisers were unsure how to best use the relatively new medium. They received many suggestions, some of which were unsolicited. Less than two weeks after the election, movie mogul Darryl F. Zanuck urged the president-elect to, "Talk frequently to the people. Revive the Fireside Chat, this time on television."[23] Before the inauguration, the incoming administration considered a proposal for a series of filmed monthly half-hour reports from the White House using "every applicable motion picture technique to accomplish its objectives."[24] The idea was ultimately rejected, as one aide noted, because "you never heard an announcer say, 'you will now hear President Roosevelt in a fireside chat by transcription.'"[25]

In the early days of his administration, Eisenhower raised the possibility of televising his news conferences. He was, nevertheless, wary of television. This is made evident by an August 5, 1953, memorandum to Hagerty:

> "I heard this morning, after we returned, that my talk to the Governors' Conference was recorded and broadcast over one of the Washington stations at 10:30 last night.
>
> "I would appreciate it if you would make sure that I am informed whenever my talk I make is either being broadcast live or recorded for later broadcast. I simply want to prevent any embarrassment that might possibly occur."[26]

More than 40 years after the fact, it is hard to imagine a president with any expectation of privacy for his or her public words!

United Nations Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, who had been Eisenhower's 1952 campaign manager, urged the president in an October 15 memorandum to embrace the medium of television as never before. "Eisenhower must be the first great television President just as Roosevelt was the first great radio President," Lodge wrote. "This has not happened yet."[27]

By November 1953, Eisenhower had made three nationwide television addresses. The last had been in June, to introduce Oveta Culp Hobby as his new secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. As Craig Allen has noted, the appearances "seemed to lack spark and imagination" when compared to the entertainment programs that preceded and followed the president's remarks.[28] The White House was planning another television speech at year's end to promote its 1954 legislative agenda. But there was a sense that the same old formula was not going to work.

Perhaps the greatest force for change was a realization that the administration had to do a better job of controlling the public agenda. That had not been a problem at the outset. The new president's handling of foreign affairs earned him a high approval rating from the American people. According to Ambrose, Eisenhower's April 16 "Chance for Peace" speech before a gathering of the American Society of Newspaper Editors was the finest of his presidency. Ambrose writes that the address evoked the greatest positive worldwide reaction to a statement made by any American since the unveiling of the Marshall Plan.[29] Only three months later, on

July 26, an armistice was reached in the divisive Korean War -- another boost for Ike's popularity.

Despite this success, there was evidence of some erosion in public support by the end of the summer. In the September 12-17 Gallup Poll, the president's approval rating had dropped to 61 percent -- still high by any standard, but lower than at any other point in the fledgling presidency.[30]

What was particularly exasperating for Eisenhower was what he saw as the primary source of this erosion: an unholy marriage of the right wing of the Republican Party and sensationalist journalists. Although he had difficulties with several members of his own party, Eisenhower's biggest headache was Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. Much of what the administration was trying to accomplish was being overshadowed by McCarthy's anti-communist crusade. Ike laid much of the blame for McCarthy's notoriety upon journalists. He told friend and Coca Cola executive William E. Robinson, "We have here a figure who owes his entire prominence and influence in today's life to the publicity media of the nation." Eisenhower then complained, "Now these same media are looking around for someone to knock off the creature of their making."[31]

Just as in his approach with seemingly hostile journalists, Eisenhower avoided direct confrontation with McCarthy. "Senator McCarthy is, of course, so anxious for headlines that he is prepared to go to any extremes in order to secure some mention of his name in the public press," Eisenhower wrote in his diary. "I really believe that nothing will be so effective in combatting his particular kind of troublemaking as to ignore him. This he cannot stand."[32] The problem for Eisenhower was that what he saw as a deliberate strategy of silence toward McCarthy was being viewed by many in the media as, at best, submission to and, at worse, tacit approval of McCarthy.

By the fall of 1953, the need for improving White House public relations was being widely discussed within the administration. The president's previously stated comments at the September 28 staff meeting may well have been the opening shot. Lodge's "television President" memo of October 15 is another indication of these discussions. However, the best indication of this concern is Eisenhower's November 5, 1953, memorandum to the cabinet. Dated just one day after the first anniversary of his election, the president wrote, "While key and top echelon figures in the fields of Journalism, Publications and Public Relations are pro Administration, yet the so important lower echelons have not been too successfully wooed." He cited what he called "the overworked red herring of McCarthyism" and a focus on a Republican setback in an October 1953 Wisconsin special congressional election as examples of how "this lower echelon 'slanting' of news and Administration stories" can do "inestimable damage."[33] The irony is that within 24 hours of the penning of this memorandum, an event would occur that would serve as a catalyst for major changes in the Eisenhower administration's approach to public relations.

The Harry Dexter White Crisis

In a November 6, 1953, speech at a business luncheon in Chicago, Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr. ignited a political fire storm when he accused former President Harry Truman of knowingly appointing a Soviet spy to a high government office. The official in question was Harry Dexter White, who served May 1946 to April 1947 as American Director of the International Monetary Fund. "Harry Dexter White was known to be a Communist spy by the very people who appointed him to the most sensitive and important position he ever held in government service," Brownell said. "The failure of our predecessors to defend the government from communist infiltration left the new Administration a necessary but very difficult task."[34]

In fact, there was evidence to suggest that Brownell's suspicions were correct. Prior to his January 23, 1946, nomination to the IMF post, White's name had been included on two FBI lists of government officials suspected of espionage. Both lists had been transmitted to Brigadier General Harry Vaughan, a presidential military aide and liaison for FBI matters at the White House.[35] A third, more detailed, FBI report on White was received by Vaughan, Attorney General Tom Clark and Secretary of State James F. Byrnes on February 4, 1946.[36] Unlike the first two, this report sparked a reaction. However, by its own admission, the White House moved too slow to prevent White's Senate confirmation on February 6.[37] White suddenly died of a heart attack in August 1947, days after espionage allegations against him were made public, but before the Truman administration's sloppy handling of the affair had been uncovered.

Brownell's disclosures set off a series of charges and counter-charges. Within hours of the speech, Truman defended his actions. The former president claimed that he had been aware of the allegations and had, ultimately, fired White. No sooner than Truman's comments were transmitted on the news wires that Hagerty said at his afternoon press and radio conference that Truman wasn't telling the truth.[38] On November 10, Truman, Byrnes (who had since become South Carolina's governor) and Clark (who had since become a U.S. Supreme Court Justice) were subpoenaed to testify before a congressional committee about their knowledge of the White case.[39] That evening, before a sympathetic audience in New York, the former president lashed out at "fake crusaders who dig up and distort records of the past to distract attention of the people from the political failures of the present."[40] This set the stage for what James Reston of *The New York Times* called "one of the stormiest White House news conferences of recent years."[41] For 19 minutes on the morning of November 11, Eisenhower was peppered with some of the harshest questions of his entire presidency.

Although the press conference rules of the day prohibited direct attribution of quotations to the president, Eisenhower managed to cool some of the passions by indicating that he didn't think Truman "knowingly damaged the United States" and saying that he opposed the subpoenas of Truman, Clark and Byrnes.[42] *The New York Times* reported on its front page the next day, "President Eisenhower took some of the personal and political rancor out of the Harry Dexter White case today by defending the patriotism of former President Truman."[43] The president further distanced himself from the controversy by declining to answer additional questions on White at his November 18 press and radio conference. Eisenhower also insisted during that session that communists in government would not be a major issue in the 1954 mid-term elections.[44] In making these statements, the president had largely defused the White controversy. He also had learned an important lesson about the value of news conferences, one that he would soon put to use.

The White drama would have all but fizzled out if not for the actions of Harry Truman. The former president had contradicted himself several times during the course of the controversy -- at first denying and later acknowledging that he had seen the FBI reports. Meanwhile, Byrnes substantiated Brownell's account.[45] Truman further undercut his own position by making several conflicting statements during a nationally televised speech on November 17 -- at first saying he suspected White all along and then defending White. Truman's conflicting statements, combined with Eisenhower's defusing comments, combined to take heat off of the White House. However, Truman also used the speech to accuse the Eisenhower administration of "embracing McCarthyism" and "debasing" the presidency.[46] That opened the door for Senator McCarthy, who, because his name had been used by Truman, demanded and got equal time from the networks. In a televised reply eight days later that Sherman Adams described as more of "a tirade against the White House and the State Department" than a response to Truman, McCarthy contradicted Eisenhower and said the communists in government issue would play a big role in the upcoming elections.[47]

McCarthy had been a burr in Eisenhower's saddle for some time. Richard Nixon wrote that a McCarthy-Eisenhower "feud" had grown out of the anti-communist crusader's attacks on Eisenhower's mentor, General George Marshall. In his memoirs, Nixon described the strained relationship as it existed in 1953:

> "Most Republicans in the House and Senate were then still strongly pro-McCarthy and wanted Eisenhower to embrace him, while the predominantly liberal White House staff members opposed McCarthy and wanted Eisenhower to repudiate him. The President himself was torn. He disliked McCarthy personally, not only because of the attacks on Marshall but because of his coarse familiarity, which Eisenhower found distasteful. But he was reluctant to plunge into a bitter personal and partisan wrangle, aware that if he repudiated McCarthy or tried to discipline him, the Republican Party would split right down the middle in the Congress and the country"[48]

Ironically, McCarthy's speech opened the door for a significant change in White House media relations. After the speech, there was considerable pressure placed upon Eisenhower to publicly rebuke the Wisconsin senator. This pressure came from both within and outside of the White House. As has already been documented, direct confrontation was not Eisenhower's style. The president's response was a prepared statement at the start of his December 2 radio and press conference. Without mentioning him by name, the president distanced himself from McCarthy by repeating his belief that communists in government would not be an issue in the 1954 elections. Because the news conference prohibition against direct attribution still stood, the president's statement was distributed as a news release after the meeting with reporters. This approach served Eisenhower's purposes well by getting his exact words on the record without having to directly confront McCarthy.

The success of this action emboldened the White House to take the next logical step. Following the president's next radio and press conference on December 16, Hagerty surprised White House reporters by releasing audio recordings of the session for use by the broadcast networks. He went on to say that reporters were free to directly quote the president from the transcripts. "I think this is the first step in opening it (presidential news conferences) up to other media."[49]

The Transformation of White House PR

Within a relatively short six-week period, the conduct of presidential news conferences had changed. The president, who had only a few months earlier expressed concern that a public speech had been rebroadcast without his knowledge, was now willing to change the rules of engagement and allow everything to go on the record. Although internal documents suggest that these changes were inevitable, they also suggest that these changes were hastened by events surrounding the White case.

There were other changes in White House public relations taking place during this period. At the height of the White controversy, on November 23, 1953, Eisenhower sent his cabinet a memorandum on the need for establishing "an effective public relations position" for the administration. It was the second such memorandum that month. In it, he wrote, "we have a task that is not unlike the advertising and sales activity of a great industrial organization. It is first necessary to have a good product to sell; next it is necessary to have an effective and persuasive way of informing the public of the excellence of the product." Eisenhower also discussed the value of bringing in outside experts to help focus the administration's public relations efforts.[50] Perhaps not coincidentally, it was also during this period that actor Robert Montgomery was asked to help in production of a year-end presidential address.[51] In doing so, Montgomery became the first presidential television consultant.

In late 1953, White House communication efforts were beginning to evolve from Hunt and Grunig's public information model of public relations into their two-way asymmetric model of public relations. According to Hunt and Grunig, the purpose of communication in the public information model is simple dissemination of information.[52] That appeared to be Ike's attitude during his September 28 staff meeting. ("Public relations is nothing in the world but getting ideas put out in such a way that your purpose is actually understood by all people that need to understand it in order to get it done efficiently and well.") Contrast that with the November 23 memorandum when he wrote, "it is necessary to have an effective and persuasive way of informing the public of the excellence of the product." The purpose for communication had shifted from dissemination to persuasion -- what Hunt and Grunig say is the purpose for communication in their two-way asymmetric model. They also note that the two-way asymmetric model is typical of competitive businesses and agencies -- the very organizations Eisenhower said he wanted to emulate. The hiring of outside consultants, indicative of more sophisticated research, is also consistent with the two-way asymmetric model[53]

This does not suggest that a total transformation from the public information model to the two-way asymmetric model had occurred in less than one year. In fact, one can argue that a total transformation never took place during the life of the Eisenhower presidency -- perhaps the topic of another paper. Nevertheless, significant changes did take place and appear to have been hastened by the White controversy.

Conclusion

The first year of the Eisenhower administration was a time of learning -- especially in the area of public relations. Eisenhower came into office on the crest of an electoral landslide. He enjoyed enormous personal popularity. As one might be having led the free nations of the world to victory in war, he was confident he could lead those same nations to prosperity in peace.

However, it wasn't that easy. Ike had to make the transition from a military leader implementing the orders of others to that of a political leader establishing, defending and persuading others about his own policies. He had to come to terms with television -- a medium in which he saw both promise and danger. And he learned a lesson that all White House occupants eventually learn, that being president does not automatically give one control over the public agenda.

The changes that occurred in White House public relations appear inevitable. But it also appears likely that they were hastened by the controversy surrounding

Harry Dexter White. In the process, the administration moved from a generally passive approach of just informing the people to a more aggressive strategy designed to sway public opinion.

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35. Rees, David. 1973. *Harry Dexter White: A Study in Paradox*. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan. New York pp 9-10.

36. "Political Storm - Brownell vs. Truman." *The New York Times*. November 15, 1953. pg E-1.

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40. Kihss, Peter. "Truman Attacks 'Fake Crusaders.'" *The New York Times*. November 12, 1953. pg 1.

41. Reston, James. "President Opposes Truman Subpoena." *The New York Times*. November 12, 1953. pg 1.

42. Official White House Transcript. President Eisenhower's Press and Radio Conference, #20. Hagerty Papers - Box 69. D.D. Eisenhower Library.

43. Reston. Op cit.

44. Official White House Transcript. President Eisenhower's Press and Radio Conference, #21. Hagerty Papers - Box 29. D.D. Eisenhower Library.

45. "Political Storm - Brownell vs. Truman." Op cit.

46. Lawrence, W.H. "Truman Accuses Brownell Of Lying." *The New York*

Times. November 17, 1953. Pg A1.

47. Adams, Sherman. 1961. *Firsthand Report: The Story of the Eisenhower Administration*. Harper & Brothers. New York. pg 135-136.

48. Nixon. Op cit. pg 139.

49. Mr. Hagerty's Press and Radio Conference; December 16, 1953, at 4:00 p.m. EST - Hagerty papers, Box 40. D.D. Eisenhower Library.

50. D.D.E. Diary Series, Ann Whitman Files - Box 3. D.D. Eisenhower Library.

51. Central Files, Official Files - Box 415. D.D. Eisenhower Library.

52. Hunt and Grunig. Op cit. pg 9.

53. Ibid.

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CRUMBS FROM THE PUBLISHERS' GOLDEN TABLES:
THE PLIGHT OF THE CHICAGO NEWSBOY

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ABSTRACT

In Chicago, as elsewhere, newsboys were not well served by the myth of the self-reliant individualist pulling himself (popular mythology has little room for the women and girls who worked as "newsboys") by his bootstraps. For while they all too often struggled alone to eke out a miserable living peddling newspapers on city streets, the newspaper publishers who employed them were part of a tight-knit association that set the terms under which the newsboys labored and disciplined any publisher tempted to offer better terms in hopes of securing more favorable treatment for his papers.

This paper examines the interaction between publishers and newsboys from the 1880s through the 1930s, documenting the collusion of the publishers, organized into the Chicago Newspaper Trust, to undermine newsboys' earnings and working conditions, and the efforts of the newsboys through strikes and boycotts, unionization and appeals for public support to resist those attacks.

CRUMBS FROM THE PUBLISHERS' GOLDEN TABLES:

THE PLIGHT OF THE CHICAGO NEWSBOY

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> The newsboys of Chicago, unorganized for years, had to be satisfied with such crumbs as fell from the golden tables of Chicago's millionaire publishers.
>
> Helpless, they suffered indignities without number.
>
> Friendless, they were robbed with impunity.
>
> .... Not content with the Trust system of creating bigger profits by making the newsboys bear all losses as well as coughing up more money for the newspapers, the publishers decided that an unsqueezed profit could still be found in the newsies' carcasses.
>
> Though forced to work from 4 a.m. to 8 p.m. to dispose of regular editions, the Hearst bulldog edition was sprung on the newsboys to keep them on the go until after midnight, and they had to take them whether they wanted them or not.
>
> On the elevated road, newsboys renting stands in stations are threatened with loss of their leases if they decline to handle scab papers...[1]

Such was the plaintive plea issued by Chicago newspaper unions during the 1912 strike/lockout (the newsboys and wagon drivers were on strike, the pressmen maintained they were locked out, and the stereotypers honored the picket lines) describing the plight of Chicago's newsboys. In Chicago, as elsewhere, newsboys were not well served by the myth of the self-reliant individualist pulling himself (popular mythology has little room for the women and girls who worked as "newsboys") by his bootstraps. For while they all too often struggled alone to eke out a miserable living peddling newspapers on city streets, the newspaper publishers who employed them were part of a tight-knit association that set the terms under which the newsboys labored and disciplined any publisher tempted to offer better terms in hopes of securing more favorable treatment for his papers. Through the Chicago Newspaper Trust, publishers set and enforced a wide range of cooperative arrangements covering advertising, distribution, labor relations and newsgathering designed to minimize the costs of operating in Chicago's highly competitive newspaper market, and to discourage new entrants.[2]

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[1] The Chicago Federated Trades (Pressmen's, Stereotyper's, Newspaper Wagon Drivers' and Newsboys' unions), "Those who are NOT Prejudiced against Organized Labor, PLEASE READ!," May 16 1912, p. 3. Chicago Federation of Labor Papers, box 1 folder 6, Chicago Historical Society.

Faced with this organized power, individual newsboys had little room for self-advancement. Rather than meekly accepting their fate, Chicago newsboys followed the example of their peers across the country, turning to collective action and unionization in order to better their plight. Even before the 1912 strike, Chicago newsboys had skillfully exploited weaknesses in the publishers' common front and openings created by the entry of new publishers in a protracted guerrilla warfare against falling margins and worsening conditions. As the newspaper trust consolidated its stranglehold, Chicago newsboys turned to unionization in a desperate battle to wrest a larger share of the profits of their labor from the publishers' golden tables.[3]

Luke Walton, Horatio Alger's Chicago newsboy protagonist, is plucky, self-reliant (his father died long ago prospecting for gold), honest and, so long as he continues to rely upon his newsboy earnings, poor. (By mid-novel Walton's honesty has led to a more lucrative sideline as a messenger for a wealthy resident of Chicago's gold coast; the novel ends with Walton recovering the family fortune by threatening to expose the swindler who stole it from his father.) Yet poor as Walton was (he begins the novel earning 60 cents a day, later his newsboy earnings inexplicably increased to 75 cents daily), he was still better off than many of the actual newsboys who roamed Chicago streets at the turn of the century.[4] A Hull House study of Chicago newsboys found that while newsboys working downtown corner stands could earn as much as $5 to $10 a day in 1903, most newsboys averaged only 32 cents daily. Even newspaper publishers conceded that some newsboys earned as little as 5 cents daily, but contended that if this "bright and intelligent lot of boys... did not have the opportunity to sell papers [they] would be deprived of a very important part of their support, and would probably lounge about in idleness and mischief... [T]hey are kept busy instead of running around with bad boys on the street, earn from 5¢ upwards a day, and are taught some valuable lessons in practical business which is [sic] useful to them afterwards."[5]

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[2] For discussion of the Chicago Newspaper trust see Jon Bekken, "'The Most Vindictive and Most Vengeful Power': Labor Confronts the Chicago Newspaper Trust," *Journalism History* 18 (1992), pp. 11-17. The most thorough account of the 1912 strike is Philip Taft, "The Limits of Labor Unity: The Chicago Newspaper Strike of 1912," *Labor History* 19 (1, 1978), pp. 100-29.

[3] Jon Bekken, "Newsboys." In *Newsworkers: Towards A History of the Rank and File,* Hanno Hardt and Bonnie Brennen, editors (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995). Roger Simpson, "Seattle Newsboys: How Hustler Democracy Lost to the Power of Property," *Journalism History* 18 (1992), pp. 18-25.

[4] Horatio Alger, *Luke Walton or The Chicago Newsboy.* New York: Consolidated Retail Booksellers, no date, but the papers mentioned were issued in the 1880s and 1890s.

Among the newsboys learning these valuable lessons was a 6-year-old newsboy who awoke each morning by 3 a.m. to deliver papers in his Stony Island neighborhood. This 41-pound "little merchant" hauled a sack of papers weighing 68 pounds.[6] Publishers claimed with some justice that they employed relatively few young newsboys in the morning hours, but the publishers of Chicago's scores of afternoon and evening papers relied heavily on child labor, as relatively few adults could be found willing to work under the prevailing conditions.

Newsboy earnings did not substantially increase in later years. In 1935, a 12-year-old Chicago newsboy reported earning 35¢ daily, while a national study (including Chicago) of children selling papers found that median weekly earnings had fallen from $2.76 in the early 1920s to $1.41 by 1934.[7] When considered as a share of newspapers' retail price, newsboys earnings not only did not increase -- they fell dramatically. In the 1890s newsboys typically received 50 percent (sometimes more) of the cover price, and could return unsold copies for credit. But publishers steadily chipped away at newsboy earnings, abolishing the return privilege and shrinking newsboys' margins each time they raised their prices. In 1885, for example, when the *Chicago Tribune* was considering cutting its price from 5 to 3 cents daily, Joseph Medill's figures (which showed the paper would actually profit from the change) relied on cutting the newsboys' margin from 50 to 33 percent. "These are fair figures," he said, "and leave the middle men an

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5. Myron Adams, *Newsboy Conditions in Chicago*. Chicago: Federation of Chicago Settlements, 1905, pp. 8, 10. Untitled, unsigned, undated comments on report, evidently from someone in the *Chicago Daily News* organization, on reel 54 of the Jane Addams Papers microfilm series, University Microfilms, 1984.

6*Chicago Tribune*, "Newsboy's Papers Heavier Than He," April 3 1904, clipping in Jane Addams Papers, reel 38, frame 1403.

7. Todd Postol, "Hearing the Voices of Working Children: The NRA Newspaperboy Letters," *Labor's Heritage* 1 (July 1989), p. 10; U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Children Engaged in Newspaper and Magazine Selling and Delivering*, Washington: GPO, 1935, p. 5.

ample profit."[8] Today the typical newsboy receives only about 25 percent of the cover price, half what they earned a century ago.

To help attract and hold newsboys despite these rather meager earnings, publishers offered a variety of other inducements ranging from vacation trips and outings to newsboy sports leagues and marching bands sponsored by the *Chicago Defender* and the *Chicago Daily News*.[9] But there were sharp limits to these inducements, as publishers agreed among themselves to prohibit subsidies such as free tickets to a local amusement park in order to avoid being caught up in a bidding war for the newsboys' favor.[10]

Newsboys typically worked on speculation, buying newspapers at discount and living off the margin between what they paid and the retail price (less losses for unsold papers, non-paying subscribers, and the like). However, a few newsboys worked on straight salary (perhaps supplemented by commissions on sales), particularly when newspapers hired "hustlers" to strengthen their distribution system or to promote an issue containing especially sensational news. And many community newspapers engaged newsboys on a straight salary basis or, worse, under an optional pay system whereby newsboys delivered papers to all residents in their territory and relied on voluntary "subscription" payments for their income.[11]

Newsboys did receive better terms from new publishers and from publishers of special interest publications desperate to get their newspapers distributed. In 1882 the publishers of two new penny newspapers gave newspapers to newsboys free of charge for their first month in the hope that the newsboys would promote their sales and thereby build up a constituency.[12] The *Chicago Mail*, in 1884, offered newsboys two-thirds of the cover price, and threw in a cup of coffee and a roll.[13] Similarly, in the 1920s the promoter of an attempt to revive the daily *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* budgeted for newsboys to retain 58.3 percent of the paper's 2-cent cover price, at a time when the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Daily News* allowed only 30 percent.[14]

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[8] Joseph Medill to William Bross (President, Tribune Company), Dec. 22 1885, William Bross Papers, box 1 folder 3, Chicago Historical Society.

[9] Enoch Waters, *American Diary: A Personal History of the Black Press*, Chicago: Path Press, 1971, p. 144.

[10] Victor Lawson to James Keeley, Tribune, May 19 1911, Lawson Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago.

[11] Fred Davis and George Nollet, "The Community Newspaper in Metropolitan Chicago," unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Chicago, 1951, pp. 70-72; Adams, *Newsboy Conditions in Chicago* and *Chicago Daily News* comments.

[12] Victor Lawson to A.H. Siegfried, Nov. 3 1882, Lawson papers -Outgoing Letters Special Series - Miscellaneous 1880-1884. "When they begin to charge even a small price, it is a question whether very many copies will be taken by the boys. As it is now, a good many boys get these copies about half an hour before the 'News' is out, and during that time are able to sell quite a number..."

A Merchant King

> I do not mean... to disparage the newsboy. He occupies in Chicago a legal position superior to that of the president of a railway company. The president of a railway company is only an employee... The newsboy... is not an employee He is a merchant...[15]

For all that Chicago publishers insisted that newsboys were independent merchants, they were militant in their efforts to prevent newsboys from gaining actual autonomy. When *Chicago Tribune* carriers sought to distribute the *Chicago Journal of Commerce* as well, the *Tribune* refused.[16] Nor were newsboys permitted to sell papers at prices other than those fixed by the publishers, to insert advertising matter in the papers they sold, or to choose what lines of merchandise they would offer their "customers." When newsboys sought to bring pressure against one or another publisher by refusing to handle his papers, the Daily Newspaper Publishers Association took a firm stand, notifying them that "You must sell all the newspapers in this association... or you cannot sell any of them."[17]

Publishers took advantage of their close cooperation to whittle away at newsboys' earnings, while newsboys seized upon interludes of heightened competition to try to restore some of what they had lost. In 1896, Chicago newsboys earned 50 cents per 100 on penny papers (75 cents per 100 on 2¢ papers), but in 1898 the evening papers agreed to a common margin of 40%, outlawed returns or exchanges for later editions, and prohibited rebates, prizes or bonuses.[18] Such agreements often broke down during periods of intense circulation competition, but were quickly reinstated once publishers tired of spending money countering each others' promotional campaigns. Given the low wages paid newsboys, and the consequent difficulty in attracting and maintaining a distribution force, publishers were under some pressure to turn to contests, bonuses and other schemes to attract newsboys, and the publishers gradually relaxed their restrictions on such incentives as long as actual cash payments were not involved. In 1943, for example, the *Daily News* responded to a resurgence of bonuses to home delivery newsboys by offering newsboys (they expected 1,000 to take advantage of the offer) who put in at least six months on the job a free trip to an Indiana boys camp. However, the paper declined to imitate a system of cash bonuses being paid by the *Tribune, Sun* and *Times.*[19]

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[13] Victor Lawson to A.H. Siegfried, Dec. 16 1884, in Bessie L. Pierce papers, box 80 folder Chicago Evening Mail - Newspapers.

[14] "Costs of Publishing an Evening and Sunday Paper in the German Language," unsigned typescript in the Otto L. Schmidt Papers, box 15 folder 8, Chicago Historical Society. The *Tribune* and *Daily News* cut newsboys' margins from 40 to 30 percent in March 1922. "Newsboys In Revolt - Will Not Eat Papers," *The New Majority*, March 18 1922, p. 3. The article announces the newsboys' union's determination to resist the wage cut.

[15] William Hard, "'De Kid Wot Works at Night,'" *Everybody's Magazine* 18 (1908), p. 28. For a discussion of the evolution of this curious doctrine see Marc Linder, "From Street Urchins to Little Merchants: The Juridical Transvaluation of Child Newspaper Carriers," *Temple Law Review* 63 (Winter 1990), pp. 829-64.

[16] *New York Times*, "Chicago Tribune Wins," Oct. 4 1922, p. 25.

[17] W.H. Turner, DNPA President, "To the Newsdealer Addressed," no date (December 1898), copy in Victor Lawson Papers, Outgoing Letters-Regular Series. On Aug. 1 1899, publishers resolved to cut off the supply of papers to any dealer offering readers a discount off the regular retail price. "News-Stands Chronology," *Daily Times Archives*, Box 58. Newberry Library, Chicago.

Chicago publishers also sought to intimidate newsboys into increasing orders or giving more prominent display to their papers. Max Annenberg hired a "staff of thugs proficient with brass knuckles" to build sales for Hearst's *Chicago American* when the paper encountered difficulty breaking into local distribution channels. The *Tribune* hired him away several years later for an extraordinary (for the times) $20,000 a year to rebuild its circulation with the aid of sluggers and revolvers. Several of the circulation men hired by Annenberg had long criminal records which continued to grow during their newspaper careers despite the best efforts of *Tribune* attorneys. The *Tribune,* Hearst and *Daily News* organizations were embarrassed when the ensuing circulation war ended up in court in 1907. "During the trial the public learned that all the big editors hired sluggers, bribe one another's newsboys, lie and steal, just like common thieves."[20] Two years later newspaper sluggers were still at it. Newsboy Willie Baker was assaulted March 24, 1909, and his papers dumped in the street in retaliation for carrying the *Daily News'* early edition in preference to the *American* and *Journal*. Newsboys had favored the upstart *American* when it entered the market because it offered more generous terms -- a 60 percent margin, and full returns privileges. But after Hearst became entrenched in the market and moved closer to other publishers, he adopted his competitors' terms of 40 percent, nonreturnable. Newsboys who resisted the move by cutting orders or stopping the *American* altogether saw their news stands destroyed while *American/Journal* agents sought to take over their corners.[21] Several months later the *Journal* and the *American* were fighting and an *American* circulation man slashed newsboy Nick Ferrara's throat with a razor after he refused orders to give the *Daily News* and the *American* the best display space on his stand.[22]

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[18] Agreement signed by *Chicago Evening Post, Journal, Dispatch* and *Daily News,* July 27 1898, Lawson Papers. Morning papers later reached a similar agreement providing for a 30% margin. Undated 6-page agreement between the *Tribune, Times-Herald, Chronicle and Record,* Lawson Papers, Dec. 5 1899 - May 24 1899 binder. The agreements broke down after Hearst entered the market, offering newsboys a 60% margin, fully returnable. Publishers were unable to wield sufficient force to dissuade newsboys from favoring the *American* under these terms, and so were forced to accommodate. But they soon brought Hearst into the fold and returned to their tradition of dictating terms to the newsboys.

[19] Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with Colonel Knox on Monday, Nov. 8 1943; Memorandum... Monday, Nov. 22 1943; Times Collection, box 82 folder 2 (Letters & Interviews), Newberry Library, Chicago.

[20] *Chicago Daily Socialist,* "Newspaper Fight is All Over," July 12 1907, p. 3; Elmer Lynn Williams, "The Rise of Chicago Gun Men," WCFL broadcast, July 24 and 25, 1930, and "Tribune Gunmen Run Amuck," WCFL broadcast, July 29 1930, Williams papers, box 1 folder 1930, Chicago

Historian David Nasaw notes that "Chicago was the only city where it took the publishers so long to discover that street battles were bad for business.... Circulation managers like the Annenbergs, with their arsenal of weapons, were the exception, not the rule..."[23] By one count, at least 27 news dealers were killed in the newspaper wars between 1910 and 1912.[24] Publishers generally kept such disputes out of their pages (although upstart publishers reveled in screaming the details on their front pages), but on occasion did protest to each other against excessive violence. *Daily News* publisher Victor Lawson complained that *Journal* carriers "used every means including revolvers, knives, razors and ball clubs, to drive other boys who sold papers off the corners." When the *Journal* suggested that the *News* was hardly in a position to complain, having hired a gangster they had discharged for excessive brutality, Lawson denied that the *News* had hired gangsters, claiming that the man in question was not on the payroll but bought papers like any other dealer. However, the *Journal* "has hired the Finn and Ryan crowd, who are, if

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Historical Society.

[21] *Chicago Daily Socialist*, "Hearst Rowdies Attack Newsies," March 25 1909, p. 1; "News Dealers in Grip of Papers," Dec. 4 1907, p. 1 (returns privilege revoked); "Dealers War on Chicago Papers," Dec. 3 1907, p. 1 (while *American* claims "to be the friend of the working man, [it] is putting the thumbscrews on the newsboys").

[22] *Chicago Daily Socialist*, "Hearst Slugger Stabs Newsboy," Sept. 25 1909, p. 1.

[23] David Nasaw, *Children of the City At Work and At Play*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1985, p. 66.

[24] Thomas Forbes, "Mean Street Sales," *NewsInc.*, February 1991, p. 48.

anything, worse than Clark. They do not hesitate to use revolvers and knives in their efforts to drive other boys off the corners."[25]

The at-least-implicit threat of violence remained a factor in newspaper circulation for decades. A contemporary account of the founding of Marshall Field's *Chicago Sun* claimed the Tribune agreed to allow Sun to reach newsstands only "because a circulation war, complete with slugging of newsboys, would have made hundreds of thousands of Sun sympathizers"; in negotiations with trust publishers the *Sun* said it would match the trust papers' prices if it was allowed to join the trust-owned news bureau and distribution service (for which it was prepared to pay $1 million) if "you call off the dogs of war."[26] Similarly, veteran editor James Keeley explained the decline in the numbers of Chicago daily newspapers in part by the rising costs of production, but also pointed to "the deliberate purpose of the stronger journals to exterminate the weaker ones. They set about this by buying up the key men..., by driving the sale of their papers from the streets either by a monopoly of the newsstands through the power of a close association or else by hiring thugs to beat up their newsboys." Keeley also pointed to the newspaper trust's control of local news gathering, and to the fact that "all corner newsstands are illegal and exist only with the connivance of the local authorities."[27]

Unionizing the Newsies

> Previous to the establishment of the Trust Press combine known as the Publishers' Association, newsboys were sold papers at the rate of 50 cents per hundred, with unlimited return privileges, and the further right to personally decide just how many papers they wanted to buy. These conditions promised at least a meager living, if not a high wage.... The Newspaper Trust... like all trusts used their united strength to cut and prune on all sides... in order to swell their profits.
>
> Even the newsboy was not overlooked in their frantic and mad struggle for money. Being helpless, the newsboy looked like an easy mark who could not retaliate, so the trust put on the screws by advancing the price of papers..., return privileges

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25. Victor Lawson to W.H. Turner, March 29 1900, Lawson Papers.

26. Milton Mayer, "The Chicago 'Sun,'" *The Nation*, March 7 1942, p. 279; Transcript of telephone conversation between S. Thomason and Weymouth Kirkland, Jan. 22 1942, *Times* Collection, Box 58, folder Official Carriers (confidential file). Kirkland was reporting on a discussion with Mr. Cushing of the *Sun*. The proposal was not accepted: "I told him there was really no sense in putting that to the Colonel."

.27. Report of interview with James Keeley, in Bessie L. Pierce papers, box 239 folder 15, Chicago Historical Society. After a long career on the *Chicago Tribune*, Keeley bought the *Chicago Herald*. At the time of the interview the *Herald* had long since failed, and Keeley was working in public relations.

> were revoked, and ... the newsboys were compelled to take a stipulated amount of copies whether they wanted them or not.
>
> Of course, this new system was for the purpose of eliminating all loss to the millionaire newspaper publishers and pass[ing] it along to the poor, defenseless and weak newsie...[28]

Chicago newsboys did not passively accept their lot. In 1902, they organized the Chicago Newsboys' Protective Association as a mutual aid association to lobby for better conditions for the trade and assist newsboys prevented from working by sickness or other causes. When the Association proved inadequate to meet their needs, the newsboys responded by organizing a union in 1909.[29] Their AFL-affiliated Newsboys' Protective Union played a key role in the 1912 newspaper strike. The newsboys joined a citywide strike and lock-out by pressmen and stereotypers, refusing to carry the city's leading dailies but continuing to sell newspapers (such as the socialist daily and Scripps' adless *Day Book*) produced under union conditions. The newsboys struck in solidarity with other newspaper workers, but also in hopes of resolving long-standing grievances of their own. When Hearst's *Chicago American* entered the market in 1900, newsboys seized upon the competitive situation to reclaim the right to return unsold papers for credit, to set their own hours and working conditions, and to restore margins eroded by decades of publisher collusion. But when Hearst's papers became entrenched themselves the Hearst organization reached an accommodation with other publishers, and newsboys soon found themselves even worse off than they had been before Hearst's entry, if only because of the now-systematic application of force against them.

While publishers slashed newsboys' margins and abolished the right to return unsold papers, circulation agents forced newsboys to work 16-hour days and to buy more papers than they could hope to sell under threat of having their supply of papers cut off. But the publishers were not willing to tolerate industrial action by the casual laborers who played such a vital role in getting newspapers to readers. When newsboys ignored promises that the publishers would treat them fairly if they abandoned their strike, the publishers responded by organizing a unified circulation campaign under Annenberg's direction. Gun thugs were imported to break the strike, scabs were paid comparatively lavish salaries to establish at least the appearance of normal distribution at key corners, and publishers resolved to cooperate closely with one another in the common cause of crushing the newsboys. Hundreds of newsboys were arrested during the strike, while scabs sold daily newspapers under police guard to the handful of citizens willing to buy them. Circulation men, many with criminal records, were sworn in as special deputies, harassing, beating and in some cases killing newsboys and other strike supporters with impunity.[30]

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[28] Newsboys' Union, "Facts From The Newsboys!," May 10 1912, Chicago Federation of Labor Papers, box 1 folder 6, Chicago Historical Society.

[29] *Chicago Daily Socialist*, "Ban Removed from Newsboys," March 26 1909, p. 1. An editorial that same day ("News Stands on Chicago Streets," p. 6) noted that news stands were technically illegal, effectively making them the property of who ever had the most effective gang of sluggers.

But even many publishers, while refusing to negotiate with the newsboys' union, privately agreed that the newsboys had legitimate grievances. When local Hearst executives proved intransigent, Newspaper Publishers Association President Victor Lawson wrote William Randolph Hearst asking him to intercede:

> The newsboys struck in sympathy with the drivers -- and, in a way, the drivers struck in sympathy with the newsboys. They both have a common grievance. It is referred to in the inclosed circular distributed by the newsboys, and is technically known as being compelled to 'eat papers' .... I cannot conceive that there can be any two opinions about the right or wrong of this method. I believe you will agree with me that it is wholly indefensible.... Resenting this imposition, both the drivers and the newsboys were easy material for the striking pressmen to work on when they went out. I trust you will recognize the importance of co-operating in eliminating this abuse in the Chicago newspaper field... Should we... fail to cure this evil at this time, I am sure that we shall be leaving seed for a new crop of strike trouble on the part of drivers and newsboys in the future...[31]

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[30] Chicago Federated Trades, "Those who are NOT Prejudiced against Organized Labor, PLEASE READ! The Story in Brief of the Chicago Newspaper Trouble," May 6 1912, Fitzpatrick Papers, Box 1; Chicago Federation of Labor, *Who Is Back of the Gun Men?*, Chicago: CFL, 1913; N.D. Cochran, "The Beast of Big Business Back of the Assault on Free Speech and a Free Press," *Chicago Day Book*, March 29 1913, p. 6; N.D. Cochran, "Trial of the Newspaper Gunmen who Murdered Frank Witt Put Off Again," *Chicago Day Book*, June 21 1913, pp. 1+. The strike is discussed in Philip Taft, "The Limits of Labor Unity: The Chicago Newspaper Strike of 1912," *Labor History* 19(1, 1978), pp. 100-29; Jon Bekken, "'The Most Vindictive and Most Vengeful Power': Labor Confronts the Chicago Newspaper Trust," *Journalism History* 18 (1992), pp. 11-17; and Phillips Russell, "The Newspaper War In Chicago," *International Socialist Review* 13 (July 1912), pp. 7-11.

The "News-Stand Chronology" cited above (*Chicago Times* Collection, Box 58) offers a detailed day-by-day account of the strike from the publishers' perspective. To meet the emergency, publishers agreed to limit the number of pages and editions they would print, authorized special payments for police, pledged to defend employees charged with assault for their strike-breaking efforts, and authorized payments of some $3,500 a week to "hustlers" to maintain a street presence. On Oct. 3 1912, publishers resolved to limit hustlers to subsidies of no more than $9 per week, in addition to their earnings from selling papers. While circulation managers agreed to pull all police and end payments to afternoon hustlers on Nov. 7 1912, on March 5 1913 they were still discussing the need to work towards abolishing the payments.

[31] Lawson to Wm Randolph Hearst, May 25 1912, Lawson papers. This letter was marked confidential. Hearst officials responded that they agreed that newsboys should not be compelled to "eat papers," though implementing that belief in actual practice proved somewhat troublesome.

Despite this, Lawson and the other publishers refused to discuss newsboys' grievances until they abandoned the strike, instead making supplemental payments to scab newsboys to help break the strike. Several weeks into the strike, the *Daily News* was still running less than half its presses because it had no way to distribute the papers it printed, and allowing nonunion newsboys unlimited returns in a desperate attempt to keep the newspaper on the streets.[32] Two months after the strike began, a trickle of newsboys began drifting back to the struck newspapers (though many refused to handle Hearst's *American*, where the strike had begun), although the union did not abandon the strike for several more weeks -- long after publishers pledged to stop making newsboys eat papers.[33]

Hearst executives proved incorrigible. In September 1912, Hearst circulation men opened fire against a newsboy who had returned to work, but refused to carry the *American* and Hearst's morning *Examiner*. Fortunately, they were bad shots and all five bullets missed their target. However, the *Daily News'* circulation manager reported ten weeks later that the *American* was making newsboys eat papers, and destroying copies of the *Journal* and the *Daily News*. "I sent a Daily News stand down there and it requires two men to keep it on the corner. The newsboys generally want to strike on the American but I have persuaded them up to this time not to do so."[34]

Despite such controversies, inter-publisher solidarity was strong. In March 1913, Victor Lawson wrote *American* publisher Harrison Parker advising him that the *News* had backed up their implicit threat (combined with a promise that he would no longer be made to eat papers) against a newsboy who was prosecuting a circulation man for kicking in his teeth.[35]

Lawson to SS Carvalho, NY American, May 31 1912, Lawson papers.

[32] Lawson to JB Woodward (CDN New York advertising representative), June 24 1912, Lawson papers.

[33] Lawson wrote SS Carvalho (New York American, July 26 1912) to bring pressure upon local Hearst officials to go along with other publishers. "I am compelled to believe that the real ground of Mr. Henderson's opposition to the resolution is that he wants to continue the method of making the newsboys eat Americans which he could not do if the boy could appeal to the Association for protection. I have two specific complaints against American made within last two days by newsboys who say the American drivers are compelling them to buy more Americans than they can sell... The eating papers imposition is so scandalous that it must be made impossible if we are to get the striking newsboys back and when back avoid future troubles with them."

[34] Lawson to SS Carvalho, Dec. 3 1912 (quoting Walter Inman); Lawson to Carvalho, Sept. 16 1912 (quoting Field of the Tribune); Affidavit of William Mooney April 25 1913 (newsboy beaten by Hearst circulation man after refused to take unwanted papers); all in Lawson papers.

[35] Lawson to Harrison Parker, March 4 1913, Lawson papers. Marked personal and confidential.

Despite the union's defeat in the 1912 strike, it survived at least through 1935, although it had difficulty maintaining dues payments and rarely represented more than a few hundred of the thousands of newsboys working in metropolitan Chicago.[36] While the newsboys paid a heavy price during the strike, in many ways they emerged from it stronger than before. Publishers did not formally concede any of the newsboys' demands, but they did begin meeting with representatives of the newsboys' union. While no publisher agreed on principle to allow returns of unsold papers, in many instances newsboys were able to insist upon returns in exchange for increasing their order or giving a paper better display.[37] And while drivers and circulation men continued to try to force newsboys to eat papers, and beat them when they objected, other publishers interceded in their behalf in hopes of averting the kind of industrial strife that had cost them so dearly.[38] Indeed, Victor Lawson's personal papers make it clear that he, at least, was badly shaken by the strike and determined to avoid a repetition of the disaster. Thus, while the newsboys were far from strong enough to force publishers to engage in formal negotiations or to meet their demands (in contrast to, for example, Seattle's unionized newsboys whose earnings [as a proportion of the newspapers' cover price] in the 1920s were nearly twice those of Chicago newsboys), they could not be ignored.

Publishers consistently refused formal negotiations with the newsboys, but they did meet with union committees and respond to their grievances -- in particular the thorny question of eating papers. Periodically, as in 1915, the Newsboys Union tried to transform these informal arrangements into binding contracts. The union pointed to deteriorating conditions as proof of the need for an agreement:

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[36] For the reorganization of the union in 1925 see: Fred Grossman (CNPU Secretary) to William Green, Dec. 2 1925; Frank Morrison (AFL) to Grossman, Dec. 5 1925; John Fitzpatrick (Chicago Federation of Labor) to Morrison, Dec. 28 1925; Morrison to Fitzpatrick (rejecting newsboys' charter application), April 10 1926; John Fitzpatrick papers, Box 14, Chicago Historical Society. For the suspension of the charter for non-payment of dues see Morrison to Fitzpatrick, March 1 1924; Morrison to O.F. Nelson (CFL), Feb. 9 1925; Fitzpatrick papers, Box 13.

A Feb. 14 1931 affidavit by Newsboys Union president Daniel Serritella figured in the 1932 mayoral campaign, used by William Hale Thompson to tie the *Chicago Tribune* (which opposed Thompson) to Al Capone and labor racketeers. Reprinted in Frank Waldrop, *McCormick of Chicago*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966, p. 142. In 1935 publishers refused the union's request for a meeting.

[37] Lawson to Parker, April 5 1913 (denies News extends returns privilege, but concedes has allowed it in some instances to encourage larger orders); Walter Inman to Lawson, April 4 1913 (American and Journal are generally accepting returns); Lawson to Parker, April 10 1913 (American is allowing returns in exchange for better display); all in Lawson papers.

[38] Affidavit of Toney Romicone, April 25 1913, in Lawson papers. American forced him to take and pay for 215 unordered papers over 9 days, was beaten up when he complained.

> We are subjected to insults and abuses which are unbearable; newsboys have had their eyes blackened, their noses broken, and their teeth knocked out on many different occasions for the simple reason that they refused to take [an] excessive number of papers. We are continually told by your drivers and division bosses that if we do not eat papers, we will be slugged and put out of business.[39]

The publishers refused to discuss the contract, but promised to address "legitimate complaints." A new struggle quickly emerged when trust publishers successfully pressured city officials to bar newsboys from carrying weekly newspapers and magazines on their stands. Newsboys were more successful in battling foreign-language publishers, forcing German dailies to back down from their efforts to limit returns and cut newsboys' margins from 50 to 40 percent.[40]

Despite repeated meetings and publishers promises to address the problem, newsboys continued to complain that they were eating papers. In 1919, for example, the Chicago Local of the American Newspaper Publishers Association offered a formal grievance procedure (albeit one wholly under the Association's control), agreed to replace papers damaged in handling, and promised that "No driver shall require any newsboy to purchase more newspapers at any time than can be sold at his stand by reasonable effort. It is the intention of the publishers to insure the elimination of any loss to newsboys due to oversupply from causes within the publishers' control."[41] But publishers' and newsboys' views as to what constituted oversupply differed sharply. In 1925, when the *Daily News* circulation department found that one newsboy often sold his entire stock of papers, they insisted on increasing his order. One election night they left 100 copies of unordered election extras, and refused to credit him for returns of 25 unsold copies. When he refused to pay for the papers he had neither ordered nor been able to sell, the *Daily News* was firm -- either he paid for all papers delivered, whether or not he ordered them, or he would be cut off. The *News* circulation department was contemptuous of the newsboy's claim that he was being forced to eat papers, claiming that on average the newsboy had been able to sell 97 percent of the papers delivered (this, of course, ignores the loss on the unsold papers and the additional hours needed on the job to hold the number of "eaten" papers below disastrous levels).[42]

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[39] Chicago Newsboys Protective Union #14567 to Chicago Newspaper Publishers Association, July 15 1915, in *Chicago Times* Collection, Box 58. The proposed contract called for a 40 percent discount, unlimited returns, an end to slugging and intimidation, and a neutral Arbitration Board to hear grievances and compensate newsboys for injuries caused by circulation men.

[40] "News Stand Chronology," *Chicago Times* Collection, Box 58. See entries for Aug. 2 1915, Aug. 10 1915, Nov. 9 1914, Jan. 27 1917, Feb. 24 1917.

[41] H. Cary, Secretary, Chicago Local ANPA, to Michael Barone, President, Newsboys' and Carriers' Protective Union, Sept. 2 1919, Lawson papers.

In 1923, when *Daily News* business manager (soon to become publisher) Walter Strong met with a committee from the Newsboys Union which included a local AFL organizer, he made it clear that the newspaper did not recognize the union as a union and viewed the newsboys as independent merchants. When newsboys protested that it was impossible to earn a decent living on a newsboy's earnings, Strong told them it was a mistake to try to do so: "When a boy grew to the point where his financial needs were greater than the possibility of earning the amount at the corner he should get out of the business and give it to a younger man."[43] By 1935 the publishers felt confident enough that they refused further meetings with the newsboys union.[44]

Chicago newsboys never accepted this philosophy. But their organizing efforts were hampered by the fact that newsboys worked under a variety of arrangements, and only rarely had opportunity to come into contact with each other because of the dispersed nature of their jobs. Chicago morning papers were generally delivered by adults working jointly for the leading newspapers, while home delivery of evening papers was handled by a combination of "official" carriers and children. Street sales were handled by newsboys ranging in age from 6 (a figure that steadily rose over the years--by the 1920s it was rare for a child under 12 to be found selling newspapers in Chicago) to 80 years old. Most street sellers sold a variety of newspapers, including all the leading English-language titles, but some had exclusive arrangements with one or another publisher. And many younger newsboys did not deal with the newspapers directly, but rather obtained papers from the established newsboys known as "corner men" who monopolized major intersections with their news stands. In addition to selling papers directly to customers, these corner men let out bunches of papers to younger boys. While this enabled newsboys to obtain papers in smaller quantities and without the necessity of going to the newspaper's downtown office to pick them up, the cornermen kept half or more of the margin for themselves. In addition, cornermen occupied the most lucrative locations, often enforcing their monopoly by force if intruders wandered into their territory.[45] Thus, cornermen's interests were not always identical to those of other newsboys. Yet, whether because of their stability or the fact that cornermen tended to be older and more reliant on newspaper sales to support themselves and their families, the cornermen tended to be the backbone of the union. Among the grievances raised by the newsboys' union in 1912 was the publishers' insistence that cornermen cover their stands at all hours when regular editions were in distribution (a 16-hour day), and requiring sales of corner rights (in Chicago, as in other cities, newsboys took the position that a regularly worked corner belonged to the newsboy who worked it; newsboys claimed the right to chase away unwanted competitors and to sell the corner when they were ready to retire) to be registered with the publishers' association, which exacted a $5 notary fee.[46]

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[42] Illegible signature to W.A. Strong, April 20 1925, Lawson Papers - Incoming, Box W.A. Strong 1923-25, folder 30. The letter was in response to a letter of complaint from one of the newsboy's customers. The newsboy capitulated after the paper cut him off and sent hustlers down to take away his business.

[43] Walter Strong to Lawson, Aug. 13 1923; in Victor Lawson Papers, Incoming Correspondence, Box WA Strong 1923-1925, folder 24.

[44] W.G. Hooker, Secretary Chicago Newspaper Publishers Association, to J.F. Shandhan, Circulation Manager, *Chicago Times*, Oct. 8 1935. In *Times* Collection, Box 58, folder "CNPA - Correspondence - Reports." The rejected meeting had been requested in June.

While local Hearst executives and other circulation men (including the notorious Max Annenberg) apparently had little compunction over hiring gangsters and thugs to intimidate newsboys and literally beat them into submission, Annenberg was willing to work with social reformers for legislation restricting child labor in the trade. In 1920, Annenberg (then on the Tribune payroll) proposed a compromise with the reformers which would have restricted the downtown trade to licensed (and presumably older) newsboys, an idea which was anathema to Victor Lawson and other publishers who feared it would make it impossible to break newsboys' strikes and boycotts, and thus leave publishers at the mercy of their ill-paid and perpetually discontented distribution force.[47] Similarly, in the 1930s Annenberg, then working in New York, said he saw no justification for hiring newsboys younger than 16 years old and urged child labor

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45. Hard, "'De Kid Wot Works at Night,'" pp. 28-29.
46. "Facts From the Newsboys!"
47. Lawson to Walter Strong, Oct. 15 1920; Lawson to SE Thomason, Tribune, Oct. 18 1920; Lawson papers.

reformers to take a firmer position against the use of children in newspaper distribution.[48]

Chicago newsboys had relatively little interest in "protective legislation," at least there are no petitions or letters on record from them asking for legislation to bar young children from the trade, to limit the hours they could work, or any of the other reforms so dear to social workers' hearts. But newsboys were persistent in their demands for other reforms, reforms that would make it possible for them to earn a decent living. Thus, newsboys fought efforts to squeeze their margin, battled publishers for decades over the right to return unsold papers, and demanded compensation for injuries suffered in the course of their work. Their main weapon in these struggles, however, was the ability to pit publishers against each other. When newsboys were successful in persuading one or another of the major publishers to meet their terms, they could use that as leverage to force other publishers to either go along or see newsboys undermine their sales. But with the organization of the Publishers Association, newsboys were only occasionally able to win favorable terms from major publishers.[49] And while publishers of special interest or other (relatively) low circulation papers were generally willing to meet the newsboys' terms (newsboys struck a Yiddish-language paper that insisted on terms similar to those granted the trust papers), it was not possible for newsboys to earn a living without carrying at least some of the more popular papers. The publishers' refusal to supply papers to any newsboy who did not carry all the major dailies, then, effectively stripped newsboys of their most effective weapon, leaving them little choice but to accept whatever terms the publishers might dictate or to abandon the trade altogether.

Despite the low wages and hazardous working conditions, publishers have persuaded many people that newsboy work is rewarding. Fifty years ago, a Gallup survey found that 90 percent of respondents had no objection to letting "a son" of their deliver newspapers;" testimony, Gallup said, to the "old-fashioned American philosophy of hard work and individual

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[48] Interview with Max Annenberg, Oct. 18 1935, typescript in New York Child Labor Committee papers, box 34 folder 25, New York State Library, Albany.

[49] Indeed, the Publishers Association persisted for decades, continuing to set and enforce agreements on newspaper display on news stands, retail prices and press times well into the 1940s. See, e.g., Memorandum of Agreement, Oct. 26 1939, in *Chicago Times* Collection, Box 58, folder "Agreement between Tribune, News and Sun-Times"; Transcript of telephone conversation between S. Thomason and W. Kirkland, Box 58, folder "Official Carriers (Confidential File)." Thomason raises publishers discussions over raising daily prices to 3 cents "without this fetish of Sherman Act violation."

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enterprise..."[50] The myth of the plucky, enterprising newsboy remains strong, but the job pays as poorly -- perhaps more poorly -- as ever. Today many newspapers are moving away from child newsboys, replacing their carrier force with adult subcontractors who combine the cheapness of the child labor force with the reliability of wage workers dependent upon the job to meet their most basic living expenses. Slightly more than 40 percent of the national carrier force are now adults. Yet while economic conditions make it possible to hire adults to do work at wages which once only children would tolerate, and then only reluctantly, fifty or one hundred years ago, newspapers remain dependent upon their increasingly adult newsboy force. And while newsboy unions may seem a relic of the distant past (though newsboy unions survived in Seattle into the 1960s and in San Francisco into the 1970s), newsboys in Providence recently organized the Rhode Island Newscarriers Association after management asked them to sign a one-sided contract declaring themselves independent contractors.

Newsboys represented the vanguard of the process of externalizing industry costs through casual labor. From the outset, publishers realized that young children could be induced to work on speculation for wages and under conditions that adult workers would generally refuse. While the working conditions may have improved somewhat over the intervening years as publishers moved towards home delivery, wages have remained low and publishers have used the fiction that their newsboys are "independent merchants" to justify their refusal to cover newsboys under unemployment, workers compensation, liability and health insurance plans. Most newsboys continue to earn less than the minimum wage even in optimal conditions, and run the risk of having their meager earnings further reduced by non-paying subscribers (today's equivalent of eating papers). As a result, publishers save tens of millions of dollars each year. Rather than look to the business acumen of publishers and editors in building the great newspapers and newspaper empires of the modern age, we might do better to turn our attention to the newsboys whose underpaid labor brought those newspapers to the public and provided publishers with the profits that fueled their enterprises.

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[50] George Gallup, "News boys Retain Popular Appeal," *New York Times*, Dec. 25 1942, p. 13.

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They Work Too Hard:
How Newspapers Justified the 1924 Exclusion of Japanese Immigrants

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They Work Too Hard:
How Newspapers Justified
the 1924 Exclusion of Japanese Immigrants

In the early 1920s, the signs in some California businesses and homes explained in simple form the state's, and the nation's, soon-to-be immigration policy: "Keep out, Japs." Other signs, from San Francisco to Los Angeles, were even more challenging: "Swat the Japs," or "Are you pro-American or pro-Jap?," or "Japs, move on. California doesn't want you."[1]

Seventy years before Californians were voting on a law to limit services to illegal immigrants, they were prohibiting land ownership by Japanese. As Americans have struggled in the twentieth century with the questions of who to let in the country, from where and how many, an early dramatic statement of their views was the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924.[2]

All countries were affected in some way by the act's restrictions. The hardest hit, in terms of its exclusion and its wounded national pride, was Japan. The issue of Japanese exclusion dominated newspaper coverage of the act from the time bills were proposed in April 1924 in the United States Congress until the bills were signed into law in early June 1924. Japan's case accounted for almost one hundred percent of editorials about the act from the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and the *Chicago Defender* during this period, too. Editorial coverage of the immigration bill was substantial; the *Tribune*, for example, ran editorials on the topic nine consecutive days after the bill was introduced, and the *Times* averaged about one editorial every two days for nearly a month. Except for the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, the papers' news coverage was relatively straightforward with little apparent bias.

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[1] Edward Doherty, "A California 'close-up' of the Japanese," 18 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1:7.

[2] *Administrative Procedure Act: Statutes at Large*, 43, 153 (1924)

In *The Ambivalent Welcome: Print Media, Public Opinion and Immigration*, authors Rita J. Simon and Susan H. Alexander show that American magazines and the *New York Times* were seldom supportive of the immigrants' causes from 1880 to 1990.[3] In a review of the book J. Herbert Altschull of Johns Hopkins University states, "It is healthy for Americans, journalists in particular, to pause every now and then to examine the warts in our history and remember that our record of treatment of the downtrodden offers little ground for boasting."[4] Simon and Alexander's study was a sampling across the time period of articles in magazines and the *Times*. This study examines coverage in six newspapers of the 1924 immigration act in April and May of that year, when the bills were first introduced in the House and Senate and then approved.[5]

All of the newspapers acknowledge the problems of unlimited immigration. They knew that the new law would establish a philosophy about what America would become. Would the country keep open its doors to "different" immigrants, eastern and southern Europeans and Japanese, than those who were the pioneer immigrants in the previous several hundred years, mainly western and northern Europeans? The debate did not include the black population, a factor that will be discussed later.

"The [immigration] problem is one of the gravest which the country has faced in many years,"[6] said the *New York Times* shortly before the congressional debates in April 1924. American newspapers, through their editorials, could decide in three main ways: they could support the immigration act in its entirety, support the act but argue against exclusion of Japanese, or oppose the bill entirely. In regard to the Japanese, observers might expect differences in editorial views from a California newspaper closer to the controversy rather than a newspaper from the Northeast or the Midwest. However, nearly all of the newspapers reflected similar views.

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[3] Rita J. Simon and Susan H. Alexander, *The Ambivalent Welcome: Print Media, Public Opinion and Immigration* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993).

[4] J. Herbert Altschull, "Book Reviews," *Journalism History* 19:4 (Winter 1994), 140.

[5] The New York papers were chosen because the city was the entry point for most immigrants during this period. The San Francisco paper was chosen because many Asian immigrants came into the country through this city. Chicago and Louisville were chosen to provide viewpoints from a distance, because they were less affected than New York City and San Francisco, which were dealing with the boat loads of new immigrants. The *Daily Tribune* during this time was conservative; the *Courier-Journal* was liberal. Thus, they should offer distinct views. The *Defender* was added to consider the views of a prominent black newspaper. All editorials, about seventy-five, were photocopied from microfilm for each newspaper. Also, much of the news coverage (except wire reports) also was copied for consideration, though there was little obvious bias in the news coverage.

Immigration is a complex issue. The main arguments will be discussed here, along with how the newspapers viewed the debate. One factor to consider in the American decision-making, for example, was that the United States was not doing anything to Japan that Japan had not done to others, including the United States. The Americans excluded Japanese; the Japanese excluded Koreans and Chinese. Californians did not allow aliens to own land; neither did Japan. And, the *Chronicle* argued, Americans were allowed in Japan only because "we compelled the Japanese to admit us by sending Commodore [Matthew] Perry to shoot up their coast towns [in 1854] if they did not admit us."[7]

Still, the issue was important in America because it was a reflection of what the United States was or wanted to become, rather than a debate about the policies of other countries. The reaction in Japan was important, too, for several reasons. First, the Japanese were recovering from a devastating earthquake in 1923 in Tokyo, and relations between the two countries were at a high level because of an outpouring of post-earthquake support, financial and otherwise, by Americans for the Japanese. Second, the immigration action led to a further period of great distrust between the two countries that continued for decades.

Japan reacted in anger to what it perceived was a national insult. A day of mourning was declared in the country. In June 1924, shortly after President Coolidge signed the bill into law, as many as five Japanese men committed suicide, for the symbolic honor of their country, in reaction to the law, according to newspapers. One of men was honored with a special burial attended by national leaders. July 1, the day the bill was enacted, was declared "National Humiliation Day."[8] The period after the enactment of the immigration act was filled with tension that "bordered on a war scare."[9]

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[6] "'Supermen' and immigration," 10 April 1924, *New York Times*, 22:4.

[7] "Let reason prevail," 16 April 1924, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26:2.

Newspapers framed the debate about Japanese exclusion around four main issues. Three of the issues were essential to the act itself: the economic impact of Japanese workers in America, the factor of possible race and cultural mixing, and the perceived threat of war one day with Japan. The fourth area of editorial debate was about the manner in which Japan was excluded, rather than the exclusion itself. Through these issues, the newspapers would frame their support, in whatever manner, for the immigration act and the exclusion of the Japanese.

While one of the main views offered by supporters of the 1924 act was that the Japanese would take jobs away from American men, a view supported by several newspapers, the Japanese had good reason to believe other factors were involved. Section 11 of the immigration act allowed for immigration at a two-percent quota for non-Asians; each country was allowed an immigration level of two percent of the foreign born individuals in the United States in 1890.[10] If the two-percent quota had been extended to Japan as it was to all European countries, only about 146 Japanese immigrants a year would have been admitted to the United States.

Without a single identified source, a reporter for the *Tribune* attempted to explain in a front-page article the conflict in California: "The Californians will tell you that the

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[8] Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 247.

[9] Sadao Asada, *Japan and the United States, 1915-25* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1963), 390.

[10] The debate over which census to use became a significant point in the law. If lawmakers chose the 1890 census, then western and northern European immigrants would be rewarded with higher numbers. If lawmakers chose the more recent 1920 census, the number of eastern and southern European immigrants would increase because of the great immigration during and after World War I. Lawmakers chose to follow the 1890 census.

Japanese are an impudent, aggressive, sly, little people. They say few of them except the American born can talk plain English." This generic Californian, according to the reporter, also says: "How can they be Americans? Americans are white. The Japanese never will be white except through centuries of intermarriage, and what white man would let his daughter marry a Japanese?"[11] Yet, as will be seen, the newspapers denied that racism was an issue in the passage of the bill.

The Japanese Immigration, 1890-1920

When the United States annexed Hawaii in 1898, Japanese laborers in Hawaii, who made up about two-thirds of the islands' work force, began to move to California. The laborers sought better wages. California farm owners needed hard workers, and the Japanese had performed well in their years in Hawaii. Thousands moved from the islands to the mainland until President Theodore Roosevelt signed an order on March 18, 1907, prohibiting aliens, mainly Japanese, who had passports to go to Hawaii (and Mexico and Canada) from settling on the mainland United States.[12] Japan also agreed to stop issuing passports to laborers wanting to go to the United States. Both countries negotiated other points, too, and this action became known as the "Gentlemen's Agreement" of 1907-8.[13] For about the next twenty years, the Gentlemen's Agreement determined Japanese immigration. One aspect of the agreement allowed for laborers already in the United States to bring in their wives from Japan or Hawaii.[14] So, many of these men sent for wives. They sent pictures of themselves back to Japan, or received pictures of eligible women from Japan, and they found partners for marriage. Women who arrived in the United States by ships to meet their husbands for the first time were known as "picture brides." Some Americans found the practice to be immoral, and Japan would discontinue the practice in 1920, allowing only marriages with men who returned to Japan for at least 30 days to find wives.[15]

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[11] "California sure Jap is a sly and dangerous chap," 22 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7:1. This generic Californian added: "And yet if your son married a Japanese girl you might not take it so hard — especially if the girl were pretty. Funny, isn't it?"

[12] Immigration Act of Feb. 20, 1907, *Administrative Procedure Act: Statues at Large* 34, 898 (1907).

[13] The Gentlemen's Agreement consisted of telegrams, cables and other communications, rather than a statute. Bill Ong Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, 1850-1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993) 254.

[14] The agreement was to end the immigration of laborers. Passports still could be — and were — issued to parents, wives, and children of residents. Also, others such as former residents, merchants, students, diplomats and tourists could receive passports.

By then, though, the Japanese population had soared. From 1890 to 1920, the number of Japanese in America grew from 2,039 to 111,010 – just on the mainland. About two-thirds lived in California.[16] The sex ratio became more balanced as Japanese women made up a greater percentage of immigrants after 1910. These first-generation Japanese settlers, known as "issei," were not eligible for citizenship for several reasons.[17] Their children, though, known as "nisei," or second-generation Japanese, were U.S. citizens by reason of birth in the country.

The Japanese were successful laborers and business owners, too. Some worked as domestic help, but most farmed land considered worthless by other Californians. They grew rice and planted citrus orchards and vegetables. By 1920, their farms produced ten percent of California's crops.[18] It would not last, though.

An angry California responded in 1920 with an amended Alien Land Law. The original law, in 1913, prohibited aliens or companies with a majority of Japanese stockholders from owning, selling, or bequeathing agricultural land to another immigrant. This law included the land already owned by Japanese, and the new law allowed for leases for a maximum of three years. Japanese toiling on worthless land for three years to prepare it for citrus orchards could then lose their lease when the land became profitable.

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[15] Hing, 55.

[16] Akemi Kikumura, *Issei Pioneers: Hawaii and the Mainland, 1885 to 1924* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, 1992), 37-38. For a comparison, about 15 million Europeans emigrated to the United States from 1900 to 1924. Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans*, New York: William Morrow and Company, 1969), 94.

[17] The Japanese government did not allow its citizens to become citizens of other countries. In addition, the U.S. Congress in 1790 had given naturalization rights to free *white* persons residing in the United States for two years. After the Civil War, blacks were included. However, Asians were denied naturalization rights in the Naturalization Act of 1870.

[18] Kikumura, 49.

Agricultural needs for World War I and a loophole in the law — their children born in the states were not immigrants, so Japanese land owners gave the land to their children, or put the children as majority stockholders — reduced the effects of the law. Until 1920, that is. The loophole was closed, and the U.S. Supreme Court gave its approval in November 1923 after appeals.[19] The Japanese laborers lost their land and their economic foundation. What they had worked for was taken away. The immigration act five months later would be a final blow to the Japanese growth in America for many years.

The Immigration Act of 1924

California, with its land acts and other laws, had tried measures to limit Japanese immigration. The federal government added the Gentlemen's Agreement for further restrictions. But, as evidenced by the rising Japanese population numbers, efforts by the two countries were having little apparent effect. The only solution, many Californians argued, was a complete ban. They wanted to eliminate the allowances for wives, children, and parents and allow only visitors, such as students and diplomats. Californians and their government representatives, primarily U.S. Senator Hiram Johnson, a former governor, asked for federal help.

The mood from the West against Japanese matched the mood from the East against some European immigrant groups.[20] Immigration to the United States soared in the late nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. After World War I, thousands of southern and eastern Europeans fled their devastated countries in search of a new place to live. Many came to the United States, through New York's Ellis Island. They were not from the northern and western European countries, which had formed the "stock" of white America. Even those who were not opposed to the immigration of specific groups were worried that the United States could not handle the millions of homeless or poverty-stricken people throughout the world who wanted to relocate to other countries. So lawmakers decided to limit America's population growth.

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[19] *Webb v. O'Brien*, 263 U.S. 313 (1923). The alien land laws were not declared unconstitutional based on racial discrimination until *Masaoka v. California*, 39 Cal. 2d 883 (1952) and *Fujii v. California*, 38 Cal. 2d 718 (1952). In Hing, 60. The U.S. Supreme Court was not supportive of the Japanese immigration efforts during this time; it later ruled in 1925 that the Japanese, Asian Indians and Filipinos were not free white persons eligible for naturalization. *Toyota v. United States*, 268 U.S. 402 (1925).

In early 1924, bills in the House and Senate proposed severely limiting immigration from Europe and banning completely any immigration from Japan. Other Asians had been banned in previous years – in 1882, for example, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act[21] – but the Japanese believed they had a different, better relationship with the United States government as evidenced by the Gentlemen's Agreement.

They found out otherwise. Newspapers also were unlikely to find reasons to admit Japanese immigrants, though again and again they found positive ways to frame the idea of exclusion. Discussion of the Japanese exclusion by the newspapers can be divided into four main areas mentioned above: economy, race, national security, and political decency.

Exclusion as a tribute of respect

Why should the Japanese be excluded while Europeans would not be? They work too hard, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* argued. Thus, this act should not be an insult to Japan and its citizens. Rather, the exclusion was a compliment, a tribute of respect. It was an economic white flag to Japan, saying that American men could not compete on the same

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[20] In 1921, Arizona and Texas approved Alien Land Laws, and Washington state tightened its existing land law. Kikumura, 91.

[21] *Administrative Procedure Act: Statutes at Large* 22, 58 (May 6, 1882).

level as Japanese men. After all, the Japanese had taken land that was abandoned or deemed worthless by American farmers, and they turned it into highly productive, profitable farms. "Their superiority in many phases of life, not any American sense of superiority which they charge humbles their just pride, has made this possible," the *Tribune* said. "Their industry, ability, and thrift have put many American farmers and small tradesmen out of business."[22]

The Japanese worker worked longer hours and spent less on himself, especially if he did not have a wife and children, the *Tribune* said. He saves the money to buy more land and economic supplies, and then works even harder. "Industry, self-control, economy in expenditure are all virtues which we respect," the newspaper said, in praise of the Japanese immigrants.[23] Still, Americans had a different, higher standard of living. They had families to support at this higher standard. They wanted to spend more of their earnings on non-essential items.

The argument in the *Tribune* moved quickly, though, from economic superiority to a conquering mentality. "The Japanese agriculturist knows his business. He lives cheaply. He works hard and long. The white man cannot compete with him. Will the Japs then some day own all those smiling valleys?"[24] In a front-page article billed as offering "an unbiased something of these Japanese," reporter Edward Doherty claimed that Japan "looks with longing to the fertile valleys of California and sends its industrial army to conquer and to hold it."[25]

The *New York Times* shared a similar view about the inferiority of the white worker compared with Japanese. "The real issue is economic rather than social. Whatever element of 'inferiority' may be found, when it is considered in terms of economics, rests on the side of the whites rather than of the Asiatic races." The *Times* noted the principal objections were of the Japanese working harder, living more simply and getting ahead through diligence.[26]

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[22] "The issue with Japan," 14 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:2.

[23] "Insulting Japan," 18 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:1.

[24] Edward Doherty, "A California 'close-up' of the Japanese," 18 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1:7. About the Japanese businesses, Doherty wrote: "The stores are all clean, outside and in. The window displays are extremely artistic. There is a steady string of customers all day long. . . . Any Rotary club would be proud to talk about these stores, their methods of business, their profits, their modernness."

[25] Edward Doherty, "A California 'close-up' of the Japanese," 18 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1:7.

The ban of laborers was not enough, the *San Francisco Chronicle* said. No more Japanese women should be allowed in because these wives were economic threats, too, as potential workers and potential mothers. "Japanese brides are far more objectionable immigrants than Japanese men. They work in the field like men and their coming means several Japanese citizens per bride, who can be landowners because [they are] born in this country and who can still live in colonies, leading the dual life of American citizens and Japanese subjects."[27] The editorial added that extra ships were needed for the thousands of Japanese women heading to the United States before the exclusion's July 1, 1924 deadline.

The solution for Japanese men seeking wives? Leave the country, the *Chronicle* advised. "If Japanese lawful residents in this country wish to marry they should move back to Japan. Let us do a disagreeable but necessary job in the pleasantest way possible."[28]

"The Color Question"

Again and again, the newspapers denied racism was an issue in excluding Japanese. ■"This does not imply that it adheres to silly notions of 'superior' or 'inferior' races or believes that persons with blue eyes are better Americans than those with black," said the *Times*.[29]

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[26] "Differing standards," 24 April 1924, *New York Times*, 18:2.

[27] "The real Japanese menace," 17 May 1924, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26:1.

[28] "Co-operation Necessary," 10 May 1924, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25:2.

[29] "Preserving the American race," 5 April 1924, *New York Times*, 14:3.

- "There is no valid question of superiority or inferiority," said the *Tribune*.[30]
- "It is not because we consider the Japanese an 'inferior' race, as the Japanese should fully understand," said the *Chronicle*.[31]

And yet . . . There are *differences*, you know, the newspapers added.

The *Times* said: "This objection, it cannot be sufficiently emphasized, does not rest on any imagined superiority of the white race, but solely on the incompatibility of the different racial standards."[32] A compromise could be reached easily because Japan "recognizes that the two races cannot mix."[33]

In front-page news coverage, *Chicago Daily Tribune* correspondent Arthur Sears Henning wrote: "Fully alive to this [immigration] situation, congress has determined that it is time to safeguard our place in the sun for the benefit of posterity, to bar out unassimilable races, and to *halt the dilution of the Nordic strain in the blood of the American people* [italics added]."[34] In an editorial, the newspaper said: "We insist merely that there are differences which not only bar Japanese immigrants from American citizenship but prevent social amalgamation."[35] (*The Tribune* was alone among daily newspapers in referring to the Japanese in terms such as "a great little people"[36] and "wonderful little people."[37] The *Defender* referred to the Japanese as "yellow people" in its editorials.)

The *Chronicle* in its "non-racist" thinking said:

> We do not want them and will not have them because they are so different that they do not assimilate; because they settle in colonies from

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[30] "Japanese penetration in Hawaii," 15 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:2.

[31] "No time to stir up hatreds," 15 April 1924, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 24:2.

[32] "Asiatics in America," 27 April 1924, *New York Times*, 6:2.

[33] "Finding a way out," 29 April 1924, *New York Times*, 16:3.

[34] Arthur Sears Henning, "Congress to stand pat," 21 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1:8.

[35] "Japanese penetration in Hawaii," 15 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:2.

[36] "A Japanese boycott," 25 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:2.

[37] "Think it over," 4 May 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:1.

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> which our own people move away because the social atmosphere is destroyed; because their standard of living, being lower than ours, they undersell our people whenever it is necessary; because the Japanese government holds immigrants and their descendants forever as Japanese subjects; because they are so much more prolific than we that without restriction in a few generations they will possess our land.[38]

While no racism is involved, said the *Chronicle*, "if such aliens are allowed to enter they will come in numbers so large as to produce social and economic conditions which are unjust to ourselves and are sure to result in real race hatreds and domestic disturbances leading to international feeling which will be really 'grave'."[39]

Though the *Herald Tribune* noted "a magnificent bonfire" of racial hatred attributable to the Senate,[40] it argued the debate was not about a racial question. Guests were allowed from Japan, thus refuting any notion of racism.[41] The immigration bill did not exclude visitors such as students, professors, and ministers. In short, because Japanese could visit but not stay was proof of no racism.[42]

It was, rather, a policy decision. "[A quota system] would admit less than 250 [Japanese] immigrants a year, but it would run counter to the settled policy of this country, founded on the principle of race separation, against admitting Orientals on the same terms as Europeans," the *Herald Tribune* said.[43]

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[38] "No time to stir up hatreds," 15 April 1924, San Francisco Chronicle, 24:2. After such a critical commentary, the *Chronicle* then suggested the debate must "stop, in heaven's name, without one disagreeable word on either side, and especially with only the kindest speech on our side." Then, after calling the Japanese both virile and competent, the *Chronicle* ended with, "What this poor world needs most is good nature. Let us contribute our share."

[39] "President for exclusion," 5 May 1924, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22:1. In this editorial, the newspaper offers an unusual view of what is expected in a democratic society. "It will not help matters to publicly discuss them. When the President officially informs Congress that a certain course is desirable in initiating an international policy in which he is in complete accord with Congress, that should be sufficient."

[40] "The California lesson," 8 May 1924, *New York Herald Tribune*, 12:1.

[41] "Some friendlier way," 30 April 1924, *New York Herald Tribune*, 10:1.

[42] The *New York Times* agreed with this view ("Asiatics in America," 27 April 1924, *New York Times*, 6:2). Because the immigration standards did not exclude Asian visitors, the *Times* argued, there was no racism involved, only exclusion of workers "on account of difference of traditions and types of civilization."

[43] "The gentlemanly way," 13 April 1924, *New York Herald Tribune*, II 6:2.

Only the *Chicago Defender*, a black weekly, claimed racism. "The color question got mixed up in the Japanese debate. Our white people are determined to make this a 'white' country."[44] The newspaper ran an editorial cartoon with a California land owner tossing a brick, labeled "land shall be sold to Caucasians only." The brick was shown bouncing off the head of a Japanese man and striking the head of a black man. The caption for the cartoon said, "Perhaps it wasn't intended for us, but —."[45]

Race determined the outcome of the exclusion ban, said a *Defender* columnist: "[Japan] rose as a yellow people. As soon as it got up it wanted to be 'white.' No, said your Supreme Court; no, we wish you well but we have our hands full trying to settle who is white, and who is not white, in the U.S.A."[46] Americans had "chronic colorphobia," according to the newspaper. The *Defender* said white America wanted to take a slap at the Japanese, "the most powerful of the darker races," to prove white supremacy.[47]

The *New York Times* challenged, early and often, the notion of a Nordic superior race and the implications upon American immigration policy. In an editorial, the *Times* suggested standards to be met by future immigrants that would move the rules beyond racial qualities. "The test of the would-be immigrant is, not has he blue eyes and flaxen hair, but will he make a good citizen, will he adapt himself easily and willingly to American life, will he contribute to the strength of the American nation and the American race? There is no use in blinking the fact that differences of training and origin of many of those who would come here are so great that they cannot meet these tests."[48]

Despite this talk against a Nordic superior race, the *Times* advocated an immigration policy that sounded more like a science experiment. It was both natural and wise that

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[44] Roscoe Simmons, "The week," 26 April 1924, *Chicago Defender*, II 1:2.

[45] "Perhaps it wasn't intended for us, but —," 19 April 1924, *Chicago Defender*, 14:3.

[46] Simmons, 26 April 1924.

[47] "Stirring up race hatreds," 3 May 1924, *Chicago Defender*, I 14:2.

[48] "'Supermen' and immigration," 10 April 1924, *New York Times*, 22:4.

Americans did not want the "present blend" changed much. The newspaper endorsed a proposal to determine the present composition of the American race and "seek to preserve the existing proportion of those races which contributed to the present fusion." The result, according to the *Times*, was no discrimination against particular races or groups. "This is as it should be," it said.[49]

Even the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, which was the only daily to speak against Japanese exclusion, concurred in the talk of unassimilable groups and said the bill only favored those who furnished the best class of citizens. The editorial offered a lengthy quotation by a University of Virginia doctor, which claimed Americans had done everything possible since 1875 to ensure racial decay.[50]

A Threat of War

The *Tribune* believed that to delay the immigration ban would be damaging for the future. "To go along year by year, with the exclusion issue always irritating our relations with Japan, but never inducing us to prepare for its defense, is to make war certain, and at the same time insure that it will be fought by us at the greatest possible disadvantage."[51] The disagreement must be faced head-on, the *Tribune* argued, rather than allowed to simmer constantly. "If the Japanese either cannot or will not respect our right to exclude whom we please from our household, an issue is forced upon us from which we will not and cannot recede, ***even though our position means war*** [italics added]."[52] Without the act, the West would become an Asiatic colony.[53] If war with Japan did come because of the exclusion act, it would be a war for the American worker, "a people's conflict without qualification."[54]

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[49] "Preserving the American race," 5 April 1924, *New York Times*, 14:3.

[50] "The immigration question," 8 April 1924, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 6:2. The Louisville paper did not cover the issue much. It had a half-dozen editorials about the immigration act in nearly two months. The other daily newspapers had that many in less than ten days. The argument by biologist Dr. Ivey F. Lewis of the University of Virginia, as quoted in the *Courier-Journal*, was: "The citizen of tomorrow! Is there any problem facing our statesmen to compare in importance with this? Our country will be what it is tomorrow because of what it is today. We have undertaken the direction of human evolution. At the present moment we are bungling the job. What is happening in the United States is insuring with tragic finality that the next generation will be less capable of bearing its burden than the present one. Since 1875 we have been doing nearly everything possible to insure racial decay. The falling birth rate has been accomplished among the better classes. Unrestricted immigration has diluted our stock with millions of unassimilated aliens."

[51] "We cannot compromise a sovereign right," 16 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:1.

The act of putting Japanese and Americans together in society would even be damaging. Such a volatile mix could lead to war itself. Colonies of American workers in Japan or colonies of Japanese workers in America, the *Chronicle* said, would result in "social clashes, which neither government could prevent drifting into international antagonisms, which would make impossible the cordial co-operation of the two nations."[55]

The *Times* suggested the actions by American lawmakers could lead to future conflict. Their speeches and action against Japan was sure to intensify hatred of Americans by the Japanese. "The Senate cast responsibility to the winds and showed itself willing to sow the seeds of future wars in order to rebuke a fancied present threat. Such bull-in-the-shop tactics are as disconcerting to Americans as to foreigners."[56]

"Spite Diplomacy"

The U.S. Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, opposed the exclusion bill. While Congress was debating the bill, Hughes asked Masanao Hanihara, Japanese ambassador to the United States, to write a letter explaining Japan's position and its views about the present Gentlemen's Agreement. The letter was relayed by Hughes to the Senate. In an example of diplomacy gone terribly awry, the letter was used against Japan to rally both public and congressional opposition.

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[52] "We cannot compromise a sovereign right," 16 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:1.

[53] "Japanese penetration in Hawaii," 15 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:2.

[54] "A people's issue," 20 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:1. *The Tribune* also argued, however, that Japan would be unlikely to attack the Philippines because "the Japanese do not like or thrive in tropical climates, any more than they like or thrive in severe northern climates. It is their chief, and perhaps their sole, physical weakness as a race." From "The Philippines, Japan and America," 17 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:1.

[55] "Co-operation Necessary," 10 May 1924, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25:2.

[56] "As Congress cools off," 17 April 1924, *New York Times*, 18:1.

In the letter, Hanihara discussed many items, including the observation that Japan was most interested in the same respect and consideration as other nations. "In a most friendly spirit," Hanihara added that "grave consequences" could result from the act in regard to relations between the two countries.[57] Supporters of the bill, especially those who presented Japan as a threat to America's future, used the line to argue that Japan was trying to bully its way toward favorable legislation.

The Senate and House responded to the perceived threat with fury. Some delivered speeches against Japan, against the immigrants, against Hanihara's letter. Within a few days the bills were approved by overwhelming margins. The whole scene was an embarrassment, according to the newspapers. Editorial writers who did not support Japan were just as quick to condemn the manner of its exclusion.

"The United States is surely above the childishness of answering such imagined provocation out of pure spite by the gravest legislation," said the *Herald Tribune*.[58] "The Senate's passion is about on a level with the rage of a group of college sophomores bent on a hazing bee in retaliation for some fancied disrespect on the part of a freshman. Doubtless the United States is in a position to affront Japan or any other nation of a smaller stature; but the bully does not cut a pleasing figure among men or nations."[59]

Following 1923's earthquake in Tokyo, the exclusion act was an emotional earthquake for Japan, the *Herald Tribune* said. The ban could be accomplished through a revision of the Gentlemen's Agreement, rather than the very public immigration act. "[The Senate] should strike out the obnoxious provision that humiliates Japan. It is a wretched exhibition of jingoism."[60]

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[57] Hanihara to Hughes, 10 April 1924, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915-25* (Washington, D.C., 1924-39). In Asada, 390.

[58] "Spite diplomacy," 16 April 1924, *New York Herald Tribune*, 14:1.

[59] "Spite diplomacy," 16 April 1924, *New York Herald Tribune*, 14:1.

The *New York Times* called the quick votes "hasty and intemperate" action. The legislative work was "unwisdom by the House . . . that was not corrected by the Senate."[61]

The *Times* said that one Easter hope was that the Department of State and the Japanese government would meet to compromise with the least possible harm to both sides — or even that the president would veto the bill.[62] Still, the *Times* wasn't against the exclusion ban, though at the beginning of the debate its editorials appeared to favor some consideration of Japan's position. By the time the bill was settled, the newspaper asked only for a kinder way to deal with the problem. "It is important to preserve the distinction between the end and the means. It is the way in which Congress has acted that gives cause for Japan's attitude, and not the end which Congress sought."[63]

The *Louisville Courier-Journal* was the only daily newspaper to argue against Japanese exclusion, and it did so on diplomatic grounds. While it supported the rest of the immigration bill, the newspaper said America should not break its Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan.

Conclusion

The question of a ban against Japanese immigrants received nearly daily coverage in newspapers in different parts of the country. It was a leading story for almost two months, and the daily newspapers expressed their views often on their editorial pages.

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[60] "Uncalled-for temper," 15 April 1924, *New York Herald Tribune*, 14:1.

[61] "Affronting Japan," 15 April 1924, *New York Times*, 20:1.

[62] "A Black Friday," 20 April 1924, *New York Times*, II 6:2.

[63] "The real Japanese question," 3 May 1924, *New York Times*, 14:4.

Nearly all supported the exclusion of Japanese immigrants. They were almost the same in their views of the issues. Yes, they agreed, the United States would suffer from hard-working immigrants with lower standards of living. No, there was no claim of superior races involved. Yes, the way Congress handled the whole affair was repulsive. And yes, this likely would cause problems with Japan in the future.

Readers were offered some intriguing views. It is difficult, for example, to explain why newspapers would be so afraid of a perceived national economic threat presented by fewer than 200 new hard workers a year. Or how the editorial writers handled two seemingly contradictory thoughts at once: on the one hand, no racial superiority was assumed and no racism was involved; on the other, the daily papers argued that the two races should not, and could not, ever mix. Even some of the minor points seemed extraordinarily poor logic. For example, the *Times* argued the exclusion offered benefits for Japan. Under the Gentlemen's Agreement, Japan was responsible for denying passports to laborers. Under the immigration act, America would deny entry to everyone. Thus, the ban relieved Japan of the "irksome duty" of regulating emigration from its country.[64]

The reality of what the Congress intended, and what the newspapers supported, seemed to have little to do with the farm lands in California and more to do with the color of the skin. Except the newspapers of the 1920s used different terms, with references to "stock" and "assimilability" and "different standards." While the *Chicago Daily Tribune* said the bill was not perfect, though it did not identify any sections it wanted changed, it supported the bill editorially.

> Inasmuch, however, as it cuts the total of foreign immigration by more than half, and tends to bring in more of the stock which pioneered in America, rather than the stock which has been coming in more recent years, it is a conservative measure, in the literal sense of the word — conserving existing stocks through which we have thrived. Thereby, we believe, it

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[64] "Courtesy toward Japan," 9 May 1924, *New York Times*, 18:3.

promotes homogeneity, which is a strengthening thing.[65]

Only the weekly *Chicago Defender* and the *Louisville Courier-Journal* argued against exclusion. The *Defender* wanted the Japanese immigrants placed under the same two percent quota as others. But the editorial view was hardly an endorsement. Considering "the reverse side of the Japanese question," the *Defender* concluded the Japanese were less assimilable than any other nationality, and their manners, customs and traditions were "decidedly different." Plus, they always swore allegiance to Japan, no matter what. "In other words, once a Japanese always a Japanese." The two percent quota could be accepted because the number was so small per year and because the Japanese would be insulted by a ban.[66] The *Courier-Journal* also believed that Japan should be considered under the two percent quota.

The *Times*, and others, saw the potential defeat in an apparent victory. "In looking back over the entire dispute, the saddest part of it is the fact that so much of it was unnecessary. The object sought was obtainable by diplomatic action. . . . [The exclusion act has] sown seeds of hatred in the hearts of the Japanese."[67]

These newspapers disagreed with the method of Japanese exclusion. But they seldom disagreed with the idea of Japanese exclusion. Their views fell fairly well into line with everybody from the exclusionist leagues in California to the congressmen in Washington.

Simon and Alexander's study in *The Ambivalent Welcome: Print Media, Public Opinion and Immigration* shows that American magazines and the *New York Times* were seldom supportive of the immigrants in the past one hundred years. This study, aimed at a particular significant law in immigration history, shows that a selection of newspapers, in general, also were not supportive of immigrants' issues. The point made by reviewer Altschull is particularly important today. He noted that journalism treatment of the less fortunate offers little ground for boasting. Immigration issues do not disappear. Though the countries of origin might change, from Japan to Mexico to Haiti and Cuba, immigrants entering the United States often must face hostility or opposition to their efforts.

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[65] "Status of the immigration bills," 19 April 1924, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8:2.

[66] "Excluding Japanese," 19 April 1924, *Chicago Defender*, II 14:2.

[67] "Congress and Japan," 17 May 1924, *New York Times*, 14:3.

It is not expected that all newspapers support all immigration efforts. But, in their coverage and opinions today about those fleeing a war-torn Bosnia or Haiti, those leaving Communist countries and seeking political asylum, or those from Mexico seeking jobs and economic benefits, newspapers can learn from their past efforts in the 1920s and in other decades. Research so far indicates that newspapers rarely support these causes. A leader in race relations in the United States in the first half of this century once said, "The best newspapermen in the South have for the last thirty years been the most constructive single influence in changing racial patterns."[68]

In this limited study of the Immigration Act of 1924, there doesn't appear to be strong constructive influence among the newspaper leaders, with the rare editorial in Louisville, in regard to such a fundamental issue in America as immigration. Their reactions on the editorial pages were generally racist, despite their claims, and negative toward any Japanese immigration at all. The history of the United States press, it appears, can be written about those rare instances of courage and leadership. But it is not complete, nor is the impression anywhere near accurate, without attention to the many times when newspaper leaders had an opportunity to be leaders, to be non-racist, to be open and supportive of women and minorities, and immigrants from other countries with different customs, languages, and skin tone, but where they simply lacked the courage or the leadership to take a strong stand or make a difference.

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[68] Will W. Alexander, "Reminiscences," (unpublished, interview from Columbia University Oral History Project), 205-206. In John T. Kneebone, *Southern Liberal Journalists and the Issue of Race, 1920-1944* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), xiii. Alexander had been executive director of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, considered by Kneebone as the most influential southern liberal organization on race relations.

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AGNES SMEDLEY: A RADICAL JOURNALIST
IN SEARCH OF A CAUSE

by

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Abstract

The journalism of Agnes Smedley from 1930 to 1934 was examined in light of Smedley's development as a radical American writer. Smedley's radicalism emerges in three major intersecting themes: class, gender, and race. After working in the United States with birth control advocates and Indian Nationalists striving to end the British Raj, Smedley traveled to Germany in the 1920s and China in the 1930s. But it was in China that she found the cause to which she devoted the rest of her life. She found her life's work among the peasants and spent the remainder of her life giving a voice to those peasants and making the rest of the world "see" them. Her goal in writing on the conditions that she found in China was to cover revolution, not in the abstract, but as it affected the everyday person. Smedley's early work in China reflects her ability to use her journalism to communicate the horror and the evils of what she saw around her. For Smedley, all people were created equal, and she was determined to tell the world that, whatever the personal cost. Smedley remained until the end very much an American.

AGNES SMEDLEY: A RADICAL JOURNALIST
IN SEARCH OF A CAUSE

The four decades from 1910 to 1950 were a time of great social and political unrest throughout the world. The period, marked by two world wars, saw the merits of capitalism debated by proponents of liberalism, socialism, anarchy and syndicalism, fascism, and communism.

Agnes Smedley, who came of age during the early part of that period, spent most of those four decades trying to make sense of the social and political turmoil around her. She rebelled against the strictures American society placed upon those who were poor and, especially, those who were female. She wrote, "It seemed that men could go anywhere, do anything, discover new worlds, but that women could only trail behind or sit at home having babies. Such a fate I rejected." Smedley became instead a radical journalist who attempted to do what she could "to struggle for fundamental social change and for liberation from every form of bondage."[1]

Smedley's passion for liberating the oppressed led her to assist, in the 1920s, such diverse groups as Indian nationalists striving to end the British Raj, and birth control advocates seeking the freedom to disseminate information on the topic to American women. Her travels took her to Germany in the 1920s and China in the 1930s. But it was in China that she found the cause to which she devoted the rest of her life. Nothing, not even her own impoverished childhood, had prepared her for the poverty of the Chinese peasant. Her goal in writing on the conditions that she found in China was to cover revolution, not in the abstract, but as it affected the everyday person.

During her life, Smedley wrote six books, including an autobiographical novel, and a series of articles for such American magazines as the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and the *Call*. She was also a

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[1] Agnes Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China* (New York: Knopf, 1943), p. 7. Agnes Smedley, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution*. Edited by Jan and Steve MacKinnon, with an introduction (New York: Feminist Press, 1976), xxxii.

Her father, Charles, was a dreamer. Often he would disappear, for months at a time, with no explanation.[4] When Smedley's father was away, her mother did everything she could to keep the children fed. Smedley recalled her childhood years as colorless. She wrote, "There was but one thing on which I could depend—poverty and uncertainty." She attended school sporadically, depending on whether there was a school nearby, and worked from the age of fourteen to help provide for the family.[5]

When Smedley was eighteen, her mother died and Smedley was suddenly faced with the prospect of raising her three younger siblings, as well as the newborn child of her older sister, who had died giving birth. "Had I been more like my mother and less like my father, I would have accepted this burden as inevitable. But I resented my mother's suffering and refused to follow in her footsteps," she wrote. So she left her family to pursue an education in Arizona.[6]

A short time later Smedley married and moved to California where she became a typing teacher at the San Diego Normal School. Although her marriage subsequently ended in divorce, San Diego gave Smedley the opportunity to develop her budding political awareness. From California, Smedley moved to New York and became involved with the Indian Nationalist Movement. In 1918, she was arrested under the Espionage Act for her work with the movement and thrown into the Tombs jail in New York City for six months. On her release, she wrote for *The Call*, a New York Socialist daily, and Margaret Sanger's *Birth Control Review*.

By 1920, Smedley decided to go to Germany to be at the center of the Indian Nationalist Movement. She lived in Berlin for the next nine years, freelancing for such American magazines as *The Nation* and the *New Republic*. But with the rise of Nazism in the late 1920s, the political

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(New York: Knopf, 1943), p. 4. Janice R. MacKinnon and Stephen R. MacKinnon, *Agnes Smedley: The Life and Times of an American Radical* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 4.

[4] Smedley, *Daughter of Earth*, pp. 35, 66, 83.

[5] Ibid., pp. 46, 69, 88.

[6] Smedley, *Battle Hymn*, pp. 7, 141, 8. Smedley, *Daughter of Earth*, pp. 28, 49–50, 123–131, 141. MacKinnon, p. 13.

conditions in Germany deteriorated, and Smedley decided to leave. She took a position as a foreign correspondent with the *Frankfurter Zeitung* to pay her way to India via China.

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Smedley entered China from the Soviet Union at Manchuria in 1929. When she got off the train, she felt as though she had stepped into the Middle Ages. Nothing had prepared her for the utter poverty and despair in which the Chinese peasants lived. "Here was humanity abandoned," she wrote. "These men had grown to manhood like animals, without the slightest sense of responsibility toward each other or of human fellowship." Although she had written and fought for the freedom of oppressed people of India for ten years, the poverty had not been directly in front of her. She learned of the conditions in India only through the Indian intellectuals and revolutionaries with whom she worked. But in China, she came face to face with oppression and poverty. She saw the "rugged individualism" and the "survival of the fittest in its most primal form" as symptomatic of the then social system of China, and at the same time, she identified with the conditions and wrote, "Seeing it, I was forever saying to myself: 'There but for the grace of God, go I.'"[7]

The nature of her journalism placed heavy demands on her, "for I try to do work that is more than mere superficial journalism. I try to study and write scientifically. This is hard work, especially when I don't know a country." During her time in China, Smedley developed a style of documentary journalism called reportage, although the term was not actually introduced into American journalism until 1935. Coming to the United States from Europe, reportage was three-dimensional reporting that helped the reader experience the event recorded. Basically, the writers of reportage would describe an individual who was representative of a group and then draw larger conclusions from the particular facts of the individual. According to the historians Charlotte Nekola and Paula Rabinowitz, reportage was the ideal form of writing for revolutionary and proletarian writers because it used the individual in the service of the masses. It raised political consciousness by linking one person with larger political movements, thereby replacing personal despair and frustration with mass action.[8]

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[7] Agnes Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China* (New York: Knopf, 1943), p. 32.

But documentary reportage did more than just connect the individual with the masses. It also made vivid the unimagined existence of a group of people by picturing in detail the activities of one or more of them. It made such people visible and gave them a voice. This aspect of reportage was especially important for Smedley who was writing about the Chinese peasants, a group certainly unimagined to the average American, at least until Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth* was published in 1931. Smedley wanted not only to give these peasants a voice, but also to make Americans "see" them and their situation.[9] In the United States, the Depression created the need for a documentary approach because people did not "see" the Depression. The techniques of reportage satisfied a yearning in 1930s America for first-hand experience. There was an implicit trust in experience. For Smedley, the form allowed her to enlist emotions in her attempt to get Americans to "see" the Chinese peasants. In her earlier works, Smedley had used on occasion the techniques of reportage, but it was in China that she really developed them and used them to her advantage.[10]

At the beginning of the 1930s, China was in the midst of a civil war. The Kuomintang, the nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek, had come to power in 1926, after the death of Sun Yat-sen, China's revolutionary leader. Following Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary legacy, the Kuomintang included Communists in its ranks. But Chiang Kai-shek, viewing the Communists as a threat to his rule, ordered all Communists executed. Thousands were killed in the White Terror of 1927, and the remainder went underground. Chiang was also trying to bring under his control various war lords who had gained power in some of the provinces after the last Chinese dynasty fell in 1911. Taking advantage of the turmoil, the Japanese were at the same time quietly making advances into Manchuria and the interior of China.[11]

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[8] Charlotte Nekola and Paula Rabinowitz, eds. *Writing Red: An Anthology of American Women Writers, 1930 - 1940* (New York: Feminist Press, 1987), p. 194. William Stott, *Documentary Expression in Thirties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 54, 172.

[9] Stott, pp. 56, 172, 173, 27, 37, 33, 14, 179.

[10] Ibid., p. 72.

Smedley spent three months in Manchuria, and she was shocked by how the wealthy, and even the students she met, took the poverty and oppression in China for granted. She wrote, "In this unawareness and indifference I saw how old and how deep was China's subjection." One of the first subjects that Smedley had wanted to explore was the position of women in China. She did in "Five Women of Mukden," published in the *New Republic.* Within the sketches of five women, Smedley explored the themes of political corruption, female subjection, cultural differences, and the generation gap. She used the story of each individual woman to communicate the situation of all women in northern China. "Five Women of Mukden" gains its power through its simplicity and subtlety.[12]

Smedley began by painting a picture of an isolated city, cut off from any influences from the rest of the world. Life on the outside of the "great Manchu walls of Mukden" seemed "thousands of miles away." When the gates of the walls were swung shut at midnight, "the world beyond [seemed] more distant still." Smedley used sounds, or the lack thereof, to emphasize the political fear under which the people of Mukden lived. At first it was a night in which "the cold [seemed] to have frozen up all sound." But then the "only sound in the garden [was] the rustling of the dried leaves of the tall kaoliang stalks piled high against the gray stone walls." Inside the house, the Chinese woman talked about how her husband had been arrested as a Communist, based on the confession of a tortured friend. The woman had borrowed money to bribe the officials and now needed money to "induce" a lawyer to demand a trial for the husband. Since the law apparently provided for a "public trial," Smedley, as the participant observer, asked if she could attend. The people in the house were outraged. The trials were always secret. If a foreign woman attended, the authorities would wonder how she had come to know of the trial, and they would all be arrested. Then the woman "goes away." "When she is gone, there is again no sound except the rustling of the dry kaoliang leaves in our garden." It was almost as if the woman had not existed. The suddenness of the woman's departure and the odd language used by Smedley to describe her departure emphasized the secretive and furtive nature of their discussion.

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[11] MacKinnon and MacKinnon, *Agnes Smedley,* p. 137.

[12] Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China*, p. 39. "Five Women of Mukden," *New Republic,* June 11, 1930, p. 99. Mukden was a city in the province of Manchuria in the northern part of China.

The next woman profiled by Smedley in the article was Smedley's hostess in Mukden. The woman was very old-fashioned by Western standards. She rose when her husband entered the room and gave him her seat. She could not read, but asked intelligent questions of Smedley. She came to Mukden at the age of fifteen to marry a man she had never met. Since then, she had given birth to twelve children, of whom six had died. In this woman, now "old, worn out, and ugly," Smedley must have seen the American women of her childhood. Like those women, this Chinese woman had given of herself and had received nothing in return. Now the husband wanted to bring home a girl of sixteen as his second wife. The woman made no objection, but the eldest son, a modern student, stood up for his mother and forbade his father to bring another woman into the house.

Smedley was able to find out more about the situation of women in Mukden from a young woman teacher who had been educated in America. Together, they had tried to gain entrance to a woman's prison, but they were turned away after being told the director was ill. The teacher was told privately they were denied permission because the prison was too dirty to be seen by a foreign journalist. The teacher did, however, tell Smedley that women in Mukden were still half-slave. A man could bring home a concubine, and his first wife could not object, and indeed was supposed to pretend to be a friend of the newcomer. Smedley did not comment on what she must have thought an intolerable situation for women, but she did get in her parting shot at the men. She asked the teacher what crimes the women prisoners had committed. The reply was that the majority were in for murdering their husbands.

Immediately thereafter in the article, Smedley told the story of a poor, foot-bound beggar woman who was not afraid of the men. The old woman had slipped and fallen on the ice. The street was full of men who had seen the accident but none came to assist her. They just stood and laughed:

> The peasant woman did not move a leg. But she braced herself with her hands and surveyed the crowd, back and forth and all around, as a general might survey a battlefield. Then she began. She cursed the assembled men, all their ancestors back to the thousandth generation, and all the brats they would bring into the world in the future. She cursed them individually and collectively, up and down and around and about. She cursed them systematically and thoroughly, working them over inch by inch.[13]

Smedley can almost be seen cheering from the sidelines. But, it was not the ire of old women that would change China, and Smedley knew it. It would be the students. The last story of Chinese life in "Five Women of Mukden" was of a mother and daughter boarding a tram. The mother had bound feet and hair tightly knotted at the back of her neck. Her daughter had short hair, natural feet and was tall and strong. "Many decades of culture lay between them." The tram was full of men and every seat was taken, so the daughter held onto her mother to support her. When a young male student gave up his seat for the old woman, the woman was overcome with gratitude, while the men laughed at the student's weakness. "The student and the tall girl both turned on them a look of withering scorn. Two of them—among fifty."

It is obvious in "Five Women in Mukden" that Smedley believed some modernization and Westernization was needed in China. That she did not intend for China to wholeheartedly embrace the ways of the West can be seen from her article "Hsu Mei-ling." Published in the *New Republic* two months before "Five Women in Mukden," this article focused on one woman, Hsu Mei-ling. As in "Five Women in Mukden," Smedley used the individual's situation to reflect and comment on the general. The article is a beautifully written and powerful description of life for a woman in China during a time of cultural and social upheaval. Hsu Mei-ling was "an old-fashioned girl" of the upper-class, with glossy, black hair, delicate, fair skin, and a lovely forehead. At the age of thirty and the mother of four children, Hsu Mei-ling was young and attractive. Everything about her description in the opening paragraph suggested "chaste beauty." Then, she walked, and the image was broken. "[She] is stiff and awkward, and if you look closely you can see the broad bands beneath her stockings. Her ankles are bound," she wrote.[14]

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[13] Ibid., p. 100. The ancient custom of binding the feet of women while still infants so that their feet remained like tiny "lilies," was stopped during a period of modernization at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. But those women who had had their feet bound as children were not able to unwrap their feet because of the pain that resulted. A woman with bound feet had difficulty walking and standing. Smedley considered the custom "simply a clever device to cripple women and keep them submissive." Smedley, *Battle Hymn*, p. 52.

Mei-ling's husband, five years her junior, graduated from both an American mission school and college. "He [was] one of the worshippers of modernity, which he [confused] with Americanism." The husband had moved the family to a small, modern flat, furnished with "cheap upholstered furniture," all because "he [was] a modern man." Mei-ling, whose "whole being [breathed] the reserve, the dignity, and the composure of the old-fashioned girl," bowed to the will of her husband. Then, she learned her husband was having an affair with a Russian dancing girl. Mei-ling was devastated. She cut her hair and shortened her long Chinese gowns. Now "she appeared a miserable woman trying to compete with an empty-headed dancing girl for an empty-headed husband," as indeed she was. Mei-ling even asked Smedley to teach her to dance:

> But to dance, there must be joy in the heart and the feet must be elastic and light. And Mei-ling's heart was as heavy as lead and her feet had been crippled while she was still a child. After taking a few lame steps, she stopped suddenly in the middle of the floor and wept like a little girl, holding the sleeve of her gown before her face. Two of the children stood in the doorway watching their mother. Their eyes were big with wonder. Behind us the phonograph yelped out:
>
> 'Twas in November and my heart was full of vodka
> Yup! Alay Yup!
> That's when I'm thinking of you, Sonya!

The plight of a woman trying to hang on to a younger husband is not racially specific. Smedley's American readers would have been able to relate to Mei-ling, even though the cultural problems she faced would have been foreign to them. Through the use of the individual, Smedley was able to convey to American readers difficulties faced by Chinese women in general. But, on another level, the article depicted the tensions existing in China at the time between those who believed China should become Westernized, and those who thought it should reject modernity. Mei-ling was an example of what could happen to the grace, beauty, and charm of Chinese culture if the ways of the West were embraced fully, while the husband represented the negative qualities of the West to be avoided, such as crass materialism. Clearly Smedley did not want China to take on the capitalistic nature of America and all that that would entail, but at the same time, she did want China to unbind women, literally and figuratively.

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[14] "Hsu Mei-ling," *New Republic*, April 9, 1930, p. 219.

From Manchuria, Smedley traveled south to the city of Peking and then on to the city of Nanking, then the Chinese capital. In Nanking, Smedley interviewed high officials of the Kuomintang party and "tried to be scrupulously fair in [her] articles." She still believed on this, her first visit to Nanking, that the Kuomintang represented at least China's national interests.[15] But through her reading and discussions with friends, Smedley grew to admire and respect the Chinese Communists who, for her, embodied the convictions and courage that had characterized the men of the French, American, and Russian revolutions.[16]

In May, 1929, Smedley headed for the city of Shanghai. At the time, Shanghai was the political and cultural center of China. Every artist and intellectual of importance was living there, as were the political leaders of both the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Through friends, Smedley was introduced to the reporters of the *China Weekly Review* and its editor J. B. Powell. Powell was a supporter of the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek, but was anti-British and anti-Japanese enough to find common ground with Smedley. At this time, she also met Edgar Snow, who was just starting out as a reporter in China. Most of the American reporters who were in Shanghai came to China almost by accident, "as wire-service people, freelancers, or student travelers," and ended up staying. A. T. Steele described life in Shanghai for a reporter:

> From my arrival [in December, 1931] until the outbreak of World War II, Shanghai was the news capital of China. That is where the international news agencies had their offices and where the correspondents of leading foreign newspapers were based. Virtually all news out of China was funneled through Shanghai. The only other news centers of consequence were Peking, Nanking, and (later) Chungking. With its cosmopolitan population and its sinful reputation, Shanghai was an interesting place to be stationed. Life was comfortable, news plentiful, and communications good. The town had no fewer than four English-language daily newspapers, along with an array of Chinese publications to be watched closely for hot tips from backcountry correspondents.[17]

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[15] Smedley, *Battle Hymn*, pp. 60-61.

[16] Ibid., p. 74.

[17] Stephen MacKinnon and Oris Friesen, ed. *China Reporting: An Oral History of American Journalism in the 1930s and 1940s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 31-32.

Many, including Edgar Snow, were graduates of the University of Missouri's School of Journalism. Smedley too was originally from Missouri, although not from the University. There her similarity with these reporters ended. She had come to China to witness a revolution, and while the others knew little of China's situation, Smedley was already politicized. Historian John Fairbank described the group of Shanghai Americans as "all superficial—academics, government officials, journalists. We were a small thin substratum. . . . We never talked to a peasant." Smedley, on the other hand, would come to spend most of her time away from Shanghai, living with the peasants.[18]

During the fall of 1929, Smedley was invited by a Chinese friend to accompany him for two weeks of survey work in a wealthy lake region west of Shanghai. Landlordism was a powerful institution in this area, and she saw for the first time the "fatalistic acceptance of great poverty existing next to great wealth." In an article in the *New Republic*, she described her personal experience at the home of the Chu family, the most powerful landowners in the area. Again, she likened China to Europe in the Middle Ages. The landlords lived in walled houses protected by soldiers, while the peasants "in surrounding villages [existed] in a poverty equal to anything the Middle Ages ever produced." The landlords were always accompanied by armed bodyguards lest a "Communist" peasant should attack them. Once inside the Chu home, Smedley described her surroundings in sufficient detail to give her readers a sense of the opulence of the place. She and the others in her party were immediately served tea and then supper. A rattling of chains and shuffling of feet off in a corner of the great hall in which they were dining aroused only Smedley's curiousity. She learned later that two peasant men had been arrested and imprisoned in the home. Smedley and the other guests were shown the "two, ragged miserable peasants, chained hand and foot." One of her party drew her aside. "'You are living through history,' the friend with me said." Smedley answered, "'It is easier to read it.'" The next morning, after a sleepless night, Smedley visited the villages in the area, accompanied by soldiers and members of the Chu family.

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[18] Ibid., p. 75, MacKinnon and MacKinnon, *Agnes Smedley*, p. 141. MacKinnon and Friesen, p. 3,6.

On the trip, she "saw nothing but indescribable poverty, dirt, and disease." The homes of the peasants were merely holes surrounded by walls with earth floors. "The beds were boards supported by old pots and covered by filthy strips of rags." One family farmed one quarter of an acre of land, for which they had to pay rent to the landowner equal to more than half of their annual income.[19]

In the summer of 1930, Smedley went south from Shanghai to the city of Canton. Since few foreigners stayed in Canton during the heat of the summer, she had the government officials at her disposal. Smedley claimed that she relied on professors, newspapers, and herself for the "truth." In a letter from Canton, in which she said it was "ten at night and hot as hell," she described her work:

> I visit villages and talk with peasants to study the land question, which is the first and last question in China. Then I visit factories and workshops; talk with officials, all of whom are murderously reactionary with the butchery of tens of thousands of peasants, workers, and students to their credit. Then I try to read all the new literature on China; meet Chinese in a social way now and then; try to read and study economic literature that I may understand social forces better; and write, write, write. In the heat.[20]

While in Canton, Smedley was given the opportunity to travel into the province of Kwangtung, the heart of the silk district. At the time, there were approximately three million peasants living in Kwangtung. Because of the economic decline in China and the fall in raw silk prices on the world market, the peasants were living in a state of poverty. Millions of men had emigrated from the region into the South Seas in search of work. Their monthly remittances meant their families' survival. Smedley was able to interview several peasants and visit their homes, which were "bare of any shred of comfort, often furnished only with a wooden bench, a bed, a few pewter cooking utensils, and cocoon frames." Most of the peasants were barefoot, their feet hardened. They answered all questions about the economy and their social relationships with frankness, "unless the Peasant Leagues [were] mentioned. Then they [studied] their hoof-like feet and [left] you to your own thoughts."[21]

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[19] "Peasants and Lords in China," *The New Republic*, September 3, 1930, p. 69. MacKinnon and MacKinnon, *Agnes Smedley*, p. 144.

[20] Agnes Smedley, Canton, to Karin Michaelis, Denmark, July 23, 1930. Agnes Smedley Collection, Hayden Library, Arizona State University, Tempe. In June, 1930, Smedley was romantically involved with Richard Sorge, whom she believed to be a German living in Shanghai and a correspondent for the German press. Later, she introduced Sorge to Ozaki Hotsumi. Unbeknownst to Smedley, Sorge was actually a Russian spy. From 1939 to 1941, he and Ozaki transmitted high-level communications between the German and Japanese governments to Moscow. Both men were executed in 1944 by the Japanese. Because Smedley was the one who introduced the men to each other, she was later connected to their spy ring by the American army. The army quickly recanted the allegation but the damage to Smedley's reputation in post-War, anti-Communist America had been done. MacKinnon and MacKinnon, *Agnes Smedley*, p. 146.

Despite the poverty, capitalism was finding its way into the Kwangtung region. These peasants had always had to pay rent to landlords for the use of the land, but now "modern Chinese capitalists of Canton and Hongkong," were buying up the ancestral lands and subletting them. The peasants bore the weight of each successive tenancy. Money-lenders were springing up to provide money to the peasants on credit. Of the situation, Smedley wrote:

> Should I make general statements or draw conclusions, it can be said that everything in Kwangtung shows a change from the old system of aristocratic land-holdings and social system into an attempt to introduce the new capitalist system; the impossibility of the latter is manifest because the colonial position of China does not permit of the development of an independent industrial life but leaves its economic structure open to all the whims of predatory capitalism of its imperialist masters.[22]

She concluded that:

> developments in Kwangtung prove, in so far as my limited knowledge of the subject teaches me, that this section of China is proceeding along lines that go to prove absolutely the Marxian interpretation of social development. It is a most striking development, proceeding under a reactionary government that wages war on Marxism.[23]

As Smedley saw more and more of the poverty of China, her interest in the Red Army and the Chinese Communists grew. An account of a young student's experiences with the Red Army reinforced the positive image of the army Smedley was creating in her own mind. The student's account, although "quite superficial, [was] the first unbiased account of events taking place in cities or districts captured by the Communist armies in central China." Despite Smedley's pronouncement, the student was not entirely unbiased since he was sympathetic to the

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[21] "Among the Peasants of Kwangtung," *Modern Review*, September, 1930, p. 683.

[22] Ibid., p. 687.

[23] Ibid., p. 688.

Communists, although not formally one himself, when he encountered the Red Army. The student had returned from university to his native city for the summer a few hours after the Red Army had captured the city. The student was treated with respect by the soldiers because he was sympathetic to their cause. As he walked through the streets, everyone he met seemed happy and excited. On walls and doors throughout the city were painted slogans in white which said: "Workers and peasants, unite! Protect the free trade of poor traders! Poor men never fight poor men! Protect the Soviet army of workers and peasants! Carry out the land revolution! Establish the Soviet of Hunan, Hupah, and Kiangsi!" Apparently, the Red Army carried with it a propaganda corps whose duty it was to cover within one hour a newly captured city with slogans. The aim of the Red Army, as told to Smedley by the student, was "to release the workers and peasants from the fierce oppression of the Kuomintang and the imperialists," a sentiment which Smedley could whole-heartedly embrace. In this particular city, the Red Army burned the headquarters of the magistrate and the tax office. When the owner of the jewelry shop refused to "contribute to the revolution," the peasants were invited by the Red Army to loot the store. The army also "fixed" the price of essential items, such as rice and kerosene, at other shops so the peasants could afford them. But, after a few days, the Red Army was forced to leave the city before the advancing Kuomintang troops, and the city reverted to its old ways.[24]

Smedley began focusing more and more on the Communists and their heroism in her writing. In "Shan-Fei, Communist," Smedley presented the case study of the daughter of a rich landowner who became a communist and married a peasant leader. The woman was brave and strong, and although she suffered for her beliefs, she was prepared to die for them. Using the earth imagery that runs through most of her work, Smedley wrote:

> There are those who will ask: Is Shan-fei young and beautiful?
> Shan-fei is twenty-five years of age. Her skin is dark and her face broad; her cheekbones are high. Her eyes are as black as midnight, but they glisten and seem to see through a darkness that is darker than the midnight in China. She is squarely built like a peasant and it seems that it would be very

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[24] "A Chinese Red Army," *New Masses*, January, 1931, p. 8.

> difficult to push her off the earth—so elemental is she, so firmly rooted to the earth. Beautiful? I do not know—is the earth beautiful?[25]

In the middle of 1932, Smedley published her first book on China, *Chinese Destinies*, which is a social documentary on life in China. Many of the stories had been previously published in magazines, but all use reportage techniques that draw the reader into making an emotional commitment. In the first such story, "A Chinese Son Rebels," the participant observer overheard a conversation in a restaurant, in which a man lamented to his friends that he was unable to get his son to marry. The others proffered words of advice but concluded in dismay that the youth of China were turning towards communism. In another article, Smedley strung together a series of short vignettes to suggest "A Moving Picture of Shanghai." The reader moves from a happy child, to a respectable dinner, to an old man dancing in a night cafe with a young dancing girl. Juxtaposed against the latter is the shrill sound of the factory siren at five o'clock in the morning as the little children, tired women, and men go to or return from "a night's heavy labor." Other women work as prostitutes, "under the protection of foreign flags and in the full glare of the lights of the city at night," while coolies are beaten in the streets by policemen. The lights and gaiety of the wealthy side of Shanghai are continually contrasted with the city's poor and seamier sides. A foreign woman was overheard saying she wanted to leave China because she could endure it no more, and Smedley concluded:

> But there is no leaving China for the masses of the oppressed. They must stand and be beaten or shot to death as serfs, or they die fighting for their freedom. The foreigners can run away; or those who do not, remain and join the ranks of those who do the beating—only one in a hundred thousand joins the ranks of the oppressed.[26]

Smedley, who was often ambivalent toward women, perhaps because she did not understand those who would not stand up for themselves and fight, found a new respect for women in the Chinese revolutionary women. Using an individual woman, Chang Siao-hung, to reveal the role Communist women in general were playing in China's revolution, Smedley prefaced the case study by writing: "It is best that the woman speak quickly, lest tragedy overstrike her and silence her tongue forever." The suggestion is that there was a great danger in being revolutionary and hence a need for urgency. It also makes clear Smedley's intention to give these people a voice. As the woman proceeded to tell her story, she reminded the reader that what she was saying was true. She wrote: "Do you think I speak of the dark ages, of the past, or even of a quarter of a century ago when I was a child—of customs dead and gone? No, I speak of the present." The woman described the massacres of students and peasants by the Kuomintang with brutal detail, and then concluded, "Of course I am a Communist. What else can any person be who desires that the vast masses of toiling human beings shall become free men, developing for themselves a culture such as has been denied them through all ages?" Smedley left the reader with no choice. The reader must agree with the woman or be aligned with those who commit atrocities against innocent people.[27]

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[25] "Shan-fei, Communist," *New Masses*, May, 1931, p. 3.

[26] Agnes Smedley, "A Moving Picture of Shanghai," *Chinese Destinies: Sketches of Present Day China* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1933), 25.

In "Living Dead," Smedley described what happened to three women who did not put the revolution first. One was a young Communist who fought alongside her husband. He escaped capture, but she was thrown into prison. Her father bought her way out on the condition that she denounce communism in a letter published in the newspaper. She did so to save her life, but her husband in turn denounced her for being a traitor to the revolution. She spent the rest of her days at her father's home, an opium addict. The second woman went insane when her Communist husband was killed, and the third gave up the revolution for material gain. She spent her time turning in her former friends. All three women were examples of the living dead, according to Smedley.[28]

Other Chinese women, although not Communists, still earned Smedley's respect. The women who worked in the silk factories in Kwangtung Province were considered by many to be lesbians because they would not marry. The mills and filatures had fundamentally changed the position of women in the area. The money these women made gave them "a weapon of great power in their poor families, and though many lost in the struggle, tens of thousands won." In fact, the birth of a daughter was greeted with pride and joy in the area.[29]

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[27] "The Dedicated," *Chinese Destinies*, p. 68.

[28] "The Living Dead," *Chinese Destinies*, p. 97.

Some of the stories in *Chinese Destinies* are humorous and light-hearted. They appear to have been written early in her stay in China because they deal with first impressions, although no dates are provided to indicate when they were written. In "The Foreigner in China," Smedley gave an account of her first encounters with the foreigners living in China. None, it seemed, knew anything about the Chinese. Even "three liberal newspaper men" could not introduce Smedley to any Chinese people. They gathered their news from the Chinese and foreign press, Chinese officials and foreign secret services.[30]

In "Mosquitoes Turned Guerrilla Warriors," Smedley opened with a joke: "'When is a mosquito not a mosquito?' asked the cynical old frog. The tadpole gave up, for he was young and didn't know much about Shanghai. 'When it is a newspaper,' laughed the frog—and the tadpole looked discouraged." Mosquitoes, it appears, were little illegal dailies that sprang up in Shanghai after the Kuomintang decided it "knew the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help it God," and imposed censorship on the Chinese press. These dailies existed for a few days, weeks, months, depending on what they published and how quick they were in dodging the police. Often, the police would swoop in to suppress a daily and find nothing except "perhaps an old chair." Lengthy articles would then appear in the Chinese press about the large quantities of Communist literature seized. It did not take long for the British to associate Smedley with a mosquito. She wrote:

> Once after they raided a room with a chair in it—so it was told to me—the rumor went around Shanghai that documents seized proved that the Communists were plotting to establish a new government and that I, writer of these seditious lines, had been sent out as the propaganda agent for the new regime. The membership of this new regime seemed to consist of the personal enemies of the Shanghai police force or the various secret services. One was regarded as a suspicious character

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[29] "Contrasts," *Chinese Destinies*, p. 116.

[30] "The Foreigner in China," *Chinese Destinies*, p. 109.

> because he studied the labor problems; of course, all decent Chinese in general were suspected. We were all disappointed at the jobs assigned us. I, at least, had wanted to be King.[31]

Like the insect, the little dailies kept popping up no matter what the authorities did. "So they [were] struck at, time and again; and again and again they [dodged] and [bobbed] up some place else like a cork on a river." According to Smedley, even the government officials read the mosquitoes because they were only newspapers that carried any "real" news. But not all of the mosquitoes were dedicated to communism or to the revolution. Many were little more than gossip columns, of little concern to the authorities.

Smedley's second book on China was *China's Red Army Marches*, the first work in English on the history of the Communist party in China from 1927 to 1931. In her introduction, Smedley indicated that the book consisted of stories "based on actual events in which leading personalities of China have taken part." She had hidden a wounded Red Army commander in her home in Shanghai while he recuperated, and she learned of the events about which she wrote from him and others. Since she was not present for any of the events described in the book, the work is a series of case studies with no first-hand observations. Perhaps because she was not present for any of these events, the work lacks credibility and power.[32]

Smedley's biases toward the Red Army are clear from the outset. In her introduction, she stressed the democratic nature of the Red Army, which proposed an alliance with the Kuomintang to fight the Japanese. The Red Army was prepared to present a united front on three conditions: first, that the wars on the Chinese Soviet regions ceased, second, that the Chinese people be granted the democratic rights of free speech, press, assembly, and organization; and third, that the people be allowed to organize armed detachments of anti-Japanese volunteers. Certainly, an American reader would find such conditions not only reasonable but self-evident. But they were necessary in China because Chiang Kai-shek, "dictator of the Nanking Government and beloved 'strong man' supported by the foreign capitalist powers," threatened with death anyone who advocated fighting the Japanese instead of the Red Army. It is clear from the tone she set in the introduction and how she immediately almost wrapped the Red Army in an American flag, that her intention with the book was to create a favorable image of the Red Army. She referred repeatedly in the introduction to the foreign press who had labelled the Red Army as Red Bandits and who had blamed executions performed by the Kuomintang on the Red Army. She was not trying to be objective, she wrote, but just present the other side.

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[31] "Mosquitoes Turned Guerrilla Warriors," *Chinese Destinies*, p. 138.

[32] Agnes Smedley, *China's Red Army Marches* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1934).

For Smedley, that other side was openly propagandistic. She painted her peasants as heroic and the Kuomintang soldiers as lazy, stupid and cowardly. The Kuomintang men did not bayonet any babies, but they did rape and kill a pregnant woman. The Red Army, on the other hand, executed only soldiers, a few rich landlords and monks, and did so after a mass meeting in which everyone voted. The Red Army was well-organized, controlled, polite. The soldiers took only what they needed, and then only from the landlords.

Smedley's peasants welcomed and embraced the Red Army wherever it went. That the contrary actually occurred is suggested by Harold R. Isaacs in his *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*. Isaacs was a reporter in China and a friend of Smedley. His work focused on the political machinations of both Chiang Kai-shek and the Russian Communist party. He claimed that the peasants were apathetic and hostile to the Red Army and that the committees set up by the Chinese Communists fell apart as soon as the Army moved out. Smedley did not suggest in her work that viable Communist soviets were left in the wake of the Red Army, but, according to her, that was because the Red Army did not have the time to properly train the peasants in political ideology nor was it able to spare men to leave behind who could have maintained control.[33]

The Red Army, in *China's Red Army Marches*, was Communist in ideology, but, more importantly for Smedley, it was revolutionary. The cause of the Red Army was the liberation of the Chinese peasants, and that crusade was very attractive to Smedley. It was different from the stand of the Communist parties of Russia and of America. The movement was rural and peasant-based, not urban and proletarian. The repeated image in the book of peasants working all season to harvest their rice, and then having to give it all to the landlords for rent is an image that would anger the average American who believed in getting ahead through hard work.

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[33] Harold Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, 2d revised ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).

Smedley's *China's Red Army Marches* is different in its viewpoint from not only Isaacs' work, but also other books done on the Chinese Communists around this time. Anna Louise Strong, who wrote *China's Millions*, never actually talked to a peasant. She interviewed intellectuals, foreigners, and leaders for their views on the revolution. Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* examined the politics of the Red Army and the personalities of its leaders in an effort to understand the rise of the Communist party. Smedley, on the other hand, presented the revolution and the Red Army through the eyes of the peasants, not through its leaders. That viewpoint gave the revolution a social rather than a political bent. Smedley was most interested in how the revolution was affecting the ordinary Chinese.

Women are frequently shown in the book. They fight beside the men and are as brave. But, again Smedley's ambivalence toward women comes out. There were other women, especially those with young children, who complained to the men that their children were dying from hunger. The implication was that the men were doing their best to create a better world for the future children of China. They had bigger things to worry about than a crying child. At another point in the work, Smedley said there were heavy losses in women fighters in one battle because women were hard to control in battle. For Smedley, women were perfectly capable of being equal to men, but there were many variations among women. She did not idealize women as she did the peasants.[34]

The problem with *China's Red Army Marches* is that the people portrayed are not as fully developed as the individuals in her magazine articles; however, that may not be Smedley's fault. Edgar Snow, in interviewing Red Army soldiers, found that they became lost in the collectivity of the Red Army. When asked about themselves, they told only stories about the Army. The stories they told were important to them, Snow believed, not because they were there as individuals, but because the Red Army had been there and behind it the ideology for which they were fighting. Snow said the same happened when he interviewed Mao Tse-tung;

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[34] Anna Louise Strong, *China's Millions: The Revolutionary Struggles from 1927 to 1935* (New York: Knight Publishing, 1935).

> It was no longer "I" but "we"; no longer Mao Tse-tung, but the Red Army; no longer a subjective impression of the experiences of a single life, but an objective record by a by-stander concerned with the mutations of collective human destiny as the material of history.[35]

There is a sense in *China's Red Army Marches* that Smedley is trying to cover a lot of bases. In her introduction, she compared China to the Russia of 1917 to 1922. Since she wrote the book in Moscow, she must have anticipated its readership as a Russian audience that would be supportive of Communism and the Red Army. Similarly, the American Communist Party would presumably be interested in the work. But, it is also clear that she wanted to reach mainstream America. Communism is downplayed in the book. This is the story of the Red Army, not the Communist party. In fact, it is difficult to discern from the book whether the Red Army was even Communist. There was a Communist party contingent that travelled with the army and spent time proselytizing the villagers, but its members were definitely distinct from the Red Army, which was democratic, just, and fair.

The review of *China's Red Army Marches* in the *New York Times Book Review*, pointed out the negative qualities of the Red Army, and Smedley's obvious sympathy for the army. The reviewer concluded that the work threw much light on China's situation, although "in the final analysis one does not feel convinced that such an effort of the masses 'to build a new life on the ashes of the old' may lead to the establishing of a 'system in which we can advance to a progressive, free, and cultured life.'" Smedley's prediction that the Chinese Red Army would defeat the Kuomintang was dismissed with the observation that "anything may happen in China."[36]

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[35] Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* 1st revised and enlarged ed. (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1973), p. 129, 172.

For the most part, Americans were uneducated about the Communist Chinese and state of the revolution in China. American reporters in Shanghai said they could not report anything good about the Communists or bad about the Kuomintang without being labelled Communist themselves. Even if they did send in positive information about the Chinese Communists, the editors would not use it and would create their own version. According to Strong, the world was shocked when it learned at the end of 1932 in the Lytton Report to the United Nations that the Chinese Communists had become the actual rival of the Kuomintang. Strong wrote:

> Through all this period the news of Soviet China came to the world almost entirely through its foes. No foreigners were able to pass the military blockade of Nanking to enter the Red regions, and except for the collection of stories painstakingly compiled by Agnes Smedley from revolutionary fighters who occasionally reached Shanghai (a compilation for which history will be grateful to her), we have only the word of occasional missionaries briefly caught in Red districts, and of official propagandists of the Kuomintang.[37]

After completing *China's Red Army Marches,* Smedley went back to the United States. It was the first time in fourteen years that she had set foot on American soil. "America was like a strange planet," she wrote, "and the friends of my youth, now middle-aged, seemed to be living and thinking much as they had lived and thought fifteen years before." She had hoped to obtain a position as a foreign correspondent for an American paper, but nothing materialized. After an emotionally draining reunion with her family in California, she set sail again for Shanghai in October, 1934, at the age of forty-two.[38]

Although many times during her years in Germany, Smedley toyed with the idea of returning to live in the United States, no such thoughts crossed her mind this time. China was where she wanted and needed to be. Her interest in and respect for the Red Army and the peasants of rural

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[36] A. M. Nikolaeff, "The Communist Armies of China," *The New York Times Book Review,* October 14, 1934, p. 22.

[37] Strong, *China's Millions,* p. 440.

[38] Smedley, *Battle Hymn,* p. 128. Two years later her father died. At first she was stricken with remorse, then she learned that in Oklahoma he had won sixteen bottles of beer in a poker game. He drank them all. "Then he up and died."

China strengthened her revolutionary zeal. She saw herself as providing a voice to those whom the rest of the world seemed to be ignoring. Then, she became not only their voice but their advocate.

CONCLUSION

Smedley rose from humble beginnings to become a journalist fighting to give the Chinese peasants a voice, forcing the world to "see" them as she saw them—heroic individuals struggling valiantly to overcome oppression. For the most part, Smedley has been forgotten in America as a journalist. Philip Jaffe, an American Communist, attributes that to the quality of her writings. He claims they are:

> simplistic and frequently factually incorrect. As history, they have little value. As propaganda, they are now outmoded, and as autobiography, they are over-written, over emotional, and often bathetic. Thus her writings have only a nostalgic value. Moreover they show no signs of any knowledge of political theory, Marxist or bourgeois.[39]

But Jaffe's analysis of her writings and the weight he assigns her contribution to journalism are simplistic. Smedley made no pretense of being objective. She told the "truth" as she saw it and was honest about it. Her style of journalism is older and more passionate than objective journalism. She was a partisan story-teller, who became intimately involved with the people and the causes of which she wrote.

Compared with books on similar topics written by her contemporaries, such as Edgar Snow, Harold Isaacs, and Anna Louise Strong, her works do not appear to be factually incorrect. By the time Smedley got to China, she was not interested in political theory or ideologies. She wanted an economic democracy that worked. She did not particularly care what it was called. She believed, at the time, that the Communists were the best answer for China. Her death in 1950 spared her from having to confront the uglier side of Maoist China.

Her writings have value as history for they provide scholars with an understanding of the development of a radical American female journalist. They give insight into not just life in China for the peasants in the 1930s, but also life in the United States for a radical female journalist during the same period. Smedley's writings reflect an individual who identified completely with the poor, the ones who have no voice themselves. She gave them a voice, and in her writings, they come alive. Smedley raged against oppression in her work. She wanted people to see what they were doing to other human beings. She used her journalism to communicate the horror and the evils of what she saw around her. For Smedley, all people were created equal, and she was determined to tell the world that, whatever the personal cost. Smedley remained until the end very much an American and truly a daughter of the earth.

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[39] Philip J. Jaffe, "Agnes Smedley: A Reminiscence," *Survey (Great Britain)* (1974) 20: 172-179.

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Abstract

The Camera's Red Lens:
Television Coverage of Wounded Knee II, 1973

by William Hewitt

On February 27, 1973, at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, two hundred armed supporters of the American Indian Movement (AIM) seized control of the small hamlet of Wounded Knee on the Oglala Sioux Reservation. The name Wounded Knee resounded with symbolic meaning since it was the scene of an 1890 event in which the Seventh Cavalry massacred 300 Indians led by Miniconjou Sioux chief Big Foot, including men women and children. Headline writers and television commentators found the Second Battle of Wounded Knee theme irresistible.

Television critic Neil Hickey, writing in TV Guide, summarized the feelings of many media observers regarding coverage of the occupation: "In all the contentiousness surrounding the seizure of Wounded knee last winter, a thread of agreement unites the disputants: namely the press, especially television, performed its task over a quality spectrum ranging from 'barely adequate' to 'misguided' to 'atrocious.' For varying reasons, no party to the fray felt that his views were getting a decent airing."

Despite the often repeated assertion by journalists that they are objective observers and reporters of the real world, the journalists involved at Wounded Knee were more of less aware of the poor quality of their reporting and their bias and sympathy for the Indian occupiers. The issues presented by the AIM occupiers at Wounded Knee virtually disappeared when filtered through television's red lens. As media critic Paul Weaver contends, "most news events and stories are performances," and Wounded Knee provided television images at its "Wild West" best.

The Camera's Red Lens:
Television Coverage of Wounded Knee II, 1973

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The Event

On February 27, 1973, at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, two hundred armed supporters of the American Indian Movement (AIM) seized control of a trading post and Roman Catholic Church at Wounded Knee on the Oglala Sioux Reservation. The name Wounded Knee resounded with symbolic meaning since it was the scene of an 1890 massacre in which the Seventh Cavalry killed 300 Indians, including men, women and children, led by Miniconjou Sioux chief Big Foot.[1] Headline writers and TV commentators found the second Wounded Knee theme compelling.[2] The media focused on the sensational incident and its historical antecedent and suspended their skepticism and abrogated their independence. The media, especially television, found the allure of visual symbols irresistible, even if staged and manipulated by Native American participants in the occupation.

The 1973 Indian activists realized that symbolism could help focus the media on their good story. Recent Indian protests had garnered some attention to Native American issues. The occupation of Alcatraz Island from 1969 to 1971, and subsequent protest in the fall of 1972 called "The Trail of Broken Treaties," ending in Washington, D.C. with the destruction of the headquarters of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, showed Indian activists that sensational acts got media attention. The vandalization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs building "was legitimate news and," according to media commentator Desmond Smith in The Nation, "the reporting of it was, by and large, accurate and truthful."[3]

Wounded Knee II, however, would be a different kind of story, because the activists, with the complicity of the media, focused more on the symbolic than the substantive side of the story. The 1973 incident began with the looting of the trading post for food and weapons and eleven local residents being taken hostage by the activists. The activists demanded a Senate investigation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the 371 treaties between the U.S. and various Indian nations as well as the removal of elected Oglala Sioux Tribal Chairman Richard Wilson.[4] More than 250 federal law enforcement officials and various law enforcement officers, including ad hoc Guardians Of the Oglala Nation (GOONS) commissioned by Wilson, encircled the barricaded Indians. Wilson's tribal government had come to a standstill. All work on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation ceased.

The Focus

As AIM warriors moved into Wounded Knee, an NBC affiliate, KUTV, filming a documentary on AIM National Field Director Dennis Banks,[5] and alerted by the Indian leaders in advance, filmed the event as the trading post was sacked.[6] By the morning after the occupation, all three networks --NBC, CBS and ABC--had crews and reporters on the scene.[7] They were joined by reporters from Time, Newsweek, the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post, and The New York Times. The AP and UPI already had lines in at Salt Lake City and quickly beefed up their local resources. In less than a week more than 300 journalists and the foreign press moved into the area.[8] Overnight, Wounded Knee, a hamlet of 300 residents, had become a national headline and AIM's media gun found its target in the public's heart. AIM leaders were rewarded for their sensational occupation since an incredible 93 percent of the American population claimed to follow the event through television.

Robert Bernette and John Koster remarked in The Road to Wounded Knee that: "The TV crews, who provided visual coverage, thrived on photogenic scenes of Indians in war paint, with guns, and the grotesque APCs [armored personnel carriers] tearing through the tall grass."[9] The Sioux Falls Argus-Leader asserted that "there is more TV spectacular than anything else in the American Indian Movement's occupation of Wounded Knee." The Argus-Leader, furthermore, mocked the "expertise" of television commentators: "Walter Cronkite and some of his pals are so well acquainted with the Indian problem as depicted on the tube that they put Sioux Falls in the backyard of Wounded Knee, several hundred miles across the state."[10] But media critics complained that the problem was more than factual inaccuracy. An editorial in the Omaha World - Herald observed "as media theater, and particularly as television fare, the Siege of Wounded Knee has been a producer's dream. It has everything. A picturesque setting. A stellar cast of characters ... [and] An unforgettable troupe of supporting actors ..."[11]

AIM occupiers quickly learned the value of staged events for television, and television commentators and producers cooperated with them. Wounded Knee provided an example of media complicity in event making--what media critic Paul H. Weaver in News and the Culture of Lying: How Journalism Really Works calls "self-conscious efforts to create favorable impressions."[12] AIM leaders knew that the legends of Big Foot and the popularity of recently published books such as Vine Deloria's Custer Died For Your Sins and Dee Brown's Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee would virtually guarantee a good press.[13] "As one young Indian told Washington Post reporter William Claiborne, 'We're getting the whole world to watch what is happening to the Indian in America.'"[14]

Media coverage at Wounded Knee was what Daniel Boorstin called a *pseudo event*, defined as: not spontaneous, staged to be reported, with its underlying relation to the reality of the situation ambiguous, and intended to be self-fulfilling prophecy.[15] Having learned the importance of media exposure during their previous protests, the immediacy of communications was heavily in AIM's favor. AIM garnered widespread public sympathy by tapping "heavy doses of folklore and liberal guilt," according to media critic Desmond Smith in The Nation.[16] AIM leaders also realized that their time in front of the Klieg lights must be sustained long enough to reward them for such a bold "media coup d'etat."[17]

After releasing the eleven hostages on March 1, the Indians negotiated with federal officials.[18] But before negotiations could proceed, however, the camera angles had to be framed for maximum effect, as Senator Abourezk recalled: "Banks and Means wanted a teepee set up in which to conduct the 'negotiations,' but they could not find one."[19]

Terri Schultz, a reporter for Harpers, described that day's television production: "After a while [Russell Means] goes next door to a trailer where the rest of the reporters are watching the six o'clock news. He had helped direct the cameramen that day, even restaged events they missed. He is upset they did not use more footage, but admits the white canvas teepee they finally put up looks nice."[20]

The Indians, emboldened by national media attention they had gotten for previous protests, "managed" and monopolized subsequent media coverage. Their first step to control coverage was to make sure that only reporters sympathetic to their cause had access to the story. Indian roadblocks inside the government perimeter screened reporters who had to obtain Indian press credentials which included a white armband of gauze strips and an Indian creed entitled "I am an Indian" signed by AIM leaders. The reporters had to present the creed whenever challenged, in symbolic affirmation that their sympathy for the Indian protest was confirmed.[21]

The Indians were also concerned that there might be an over-zealous response from official forces that would result in bloodshed -- similar to the Attica prison riot in September 1971, when 42 died in a battle between state troopers and convicts. The Indians wanted continued monitoring by the media, knowing that the U.S. Government would not welcome scenes of combat between marshals and Indians on the evening news, recalling the images of chief Big Foot's frozen corpse from the original Wounded Knee massacre.[22] NBC commentator Fred Briggs observed, "to that extent, I suppose we were used."

But in a profound way, as a headline in the Chicago Tribune on March 25 asserted, "Theatrics Overwhelm the Uprising." The Chicago Tribune's Robert Enstad offered an anecdote that reflected examples seen by many of the journalists: "On one occasion, a young man guarding an Indian roadblock had to be reminded that he didn't look very mean or warlike with an expensive camera dangling next to his rifle," wrote Enstad. "So he put the camera aside as he posed as a warrior for a photograph." The media, concluded the Tribune's correspondent, had given the outside world a distorted picture of the self-dramatizing antics of "two hundred vagrants at Wounded knee."[23]

Some of the urban Indians who led the Wounded Knee occupation actually needed coaching on the more traditional aspects of Indian life. A London reporter, dressed to reflect his popular image of the American West in blue jeans, leather jacket, and new cowboy boots, offered a Mohawk Indian leader his copy of Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee because it turned out that the Mohawk had never read it. In another instance, "a Chicago reporter watches as several Indians shoot a cow for food near Wounded Knee. They pull the trigger, and the cow blinks but does not fall. The Indians are mystified. The reporter takes the rifle, shoots the cow once again, this time between the eyes, and it keels over. The reporter then shows the Indians how to cut up the carcass."[24]

The AIM occupiers, predominantly urban Indians, overcame their lack of background in traditional Indian ways by staging events until they got the images they wanted. In a March 12th story headlined "Indians Playing--to Cameras," the Chicago Sun-Times columnist Tom Fitzpatrick described the "arrest" at gunpoint of "four scared ranchers." They were actually four postal inspectors directed to make sure the occupation did not interfere with postal services. According to Fitzpatrick's colorful alliterations the Indians marched the four "before cameras like captured U.S. airmen in Hanoi." [The release of American POWs in Vietnam dominated press coverage during the first weeks of the Wounded Knee occupation.] James Abourezk recalled: "As they were marched past the waiting press corps, the Indians told the inspectors to put their hands on top of their heads, and they complied. One photographer was not ready, so he asked the Indians to march them by again--a request that the Indians gleefully granted. The inspectors were then released, having received their allotted fifteen minutes of fame."[25] The Omaha World - Herald critiqued in an editorial suggesting that AIM's tactics were not going to solve Indian problems, "holding a gun to a hostage's head will make headlines and TV footage, but it will not move many citizens to a rational appraisal of Indian policy."[26]

AIM's attempts to imitate traditional Indian life in dress and deeds, in fact, almost backfired. The Boston Globe saw TV as the instrumentality by which the Indians might actually be undone, while revealing the Boston Globe's own historically prejudiced viewpoint: "Television has showed us these modern Sioux. In spite of their rifles, they don't look like the old-time scourges of the frontier. Their hair is more neatly arranged than that of white hippies. They speak colloquial English and their rhetoric sounds strangely like that of Patrick Henry. As a menace, they have rank far behind the city underworld."[27] The irony of the Boston Globe's statements emerged when the networks reported that Boston Globe reporter Tom Oliphant had been aboard a private plane that dropped weapons to the Indian occupiers at Wounded Knee, thus combining reporting with aiding and abetting the Indians under siege.[28] Paul Davids, the Grand Haven, Michigan, pilot of the plane, exonerated Oliphant of the more odious aspect of his participation: "the reference in a national TV newscast to a cargo of guns is worse than false. It is a damnable lie."[29]

The Story Sub Rosa

After twenty five days of siege, a number of news organizations concluded that the costs of covering the episode out-weighed the news value, and withdrew their reporters and correspondents.[30] An editorial in the Omaha World - Herald, observed closer to the end of the stand-off, on April 11, "Their show is no longer acceptable television theater because it has become what seems like an endless rerun."[31] Coverage became more uniform as the networks and newspapers relied on feeds from those who remained. The running story became "a kind of trap, particularly for television," with AIM leaders "so enthralled by the attention they were receiving that they seemed willing to prolong the deadlock for the sake of still more publicity."[32] The attempt to get quoted, and support their accusations, induced both sides to hyperbole, at best. Terri Schultz, media critic for Harpers, asserted that both sides in the dispute at Wounded Knee lied enthusiastically to dramatize their assertions, especially about the other side, to the extent that "the main Indian spokesman was commonly referred to as Chief Sitting Bullshit."[33]

Supporters of the "AIM faction" also regretted that media coverage fell short of their expectations, according to Bill Zimmerman who flew supplies to the besieged occupiers: Especially "the liberal metropolitan newspapers and TV networks. . . [They] were the biggest disappointment. . . . They described the occupation as an event designed in advance by AIM to attract attention to itself. These commentators, as they had so often done with demonstrations in the past, allowed their personal displeasure with the Indians' tactics to be a substitute for any thoughtful consideration of the real issues at stake."[34]

Indian attorney Roman Roubideaux did not think the American public was seeing the real story: "The TV correspondents who were on the scene filmed many serious interviews and tried to get at the sense of the story, but that stuff never got on the air. Only the sensational stuff got on the air. The facts never really emerged that this was an uprising against the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its puppet tribal government."[35]

Some Got It Right

Some reporters did cut through the hype with substantive accounts. NBC's Fred Briggs used charts and photos to describe the violation of treaties stripping Indians of their land. CBS's Richard Threlkeld understood that AIM promoted pan-Indianism calling for a revolution in Indian thinking. ABC's Ron Miller vividly described life on the Pine Ridge reservation itself by showing the Indians' point of view through their eyes. But, as media analysts Clifford G. Christians, Kim B. Rotzoll, and Mark Fackler conclude, on balance, journalists on the scene did not fully comprehend the realities of reservation life, the subtleties of tribal government, the relationship of tribes to the federal government, nor the historical nuances. These media critics assert that, "reporters covering Wounded Knee complained that their more precise accounts were often reduced and distorted by heavy editing at home. In any case, after 71 days the siege ended from weariness, not because the story was fully aired or understood. During that period the press largely became an accomplice of the guns and specter, a victim of media politics rather than an agent whereby a political complaint was sensibly discussed."[36] The final negotiations to end the siege proved to be an event *manqué*, according to Harpers media critic Terri Schultz: "During the last powwow, held in a house after all, the Senators and Indians stare at one another through mirrors of South Dakota history, each mimicking images of themselves."[37]

Aftermath

In the aftermath at the scene of the stand-off, the displaced residents of Wounded Knee returned to find an estimated $240,000 of damage done to their homes. The museum had been vandalized, and the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, the activist's original headquarters, was daubed with graffiti and militant slogans. Desmond Smith concluded, "to achieve its purpose AIM had collectively penalized the village of Wounded

Knee; it was a casualty of war. And to a very large extent the media coup d'etat was successful."[38] He saw foreboding in AIM's success:

> Given the impact and immediacy of global communications, it is now entirely possible for a small group of people to intimidate the strongest of governments. It is quite clear from this that such individuals can seize upon a real political grievance, stage it imaginatively, bring in the media, and proceed to insist that their own particular solution must be accepted by everybody else.
>
> The techniques of TV and press takeover are in their infancy, but we may be sure that wherever the obsessed are gathered there are such thoughts.[39]

The Omaha World - Herald suggested that "the first-blush reaction" might be that "nobody won anything but bad publicity, that despite long confrontation nothing was accomplished." On the contrary, AIM "won a great deal. AIM won a national audience and, despite the resented resort to force and coercion, a mounting national sympathy for their legitimate demands."[40] They may have increased public sympathy, for economically and politically isolated reservation Indians, but the needs of less readily visible urban Indians remained obscure.

Writer Clyde D. Dollar, in The American West magazine, offered the most poignant post mortem:

> Here were grown men earnestly playing the uniquely American game of cowboys and Indians--except that in this case the cowboys encircled the Indians who defended the wagon train. Blustering threats and demands so desperately serious to AIM leaders turned into silly rantings of petty demagogues through exposure by the news media. Stealthy figures smuggling through the night, planes dropping mysterious bundles by the dawn's early dark, swaggering youths imitating ghosts of great warriors, 'spontaneous' acts of defiant hostility rehearsed before performance -- all this has the ring of a poorly written movie satire.[41]

The issues presented by the AIM occupiers at the outset of their protest virtually disappeared after the occupation began. Television newsmen confessed that they had been "manipulated." The television's red lens filtered out all but the symbolic images of Indians. As media critic Paul W. Weaver observes, "most news events and stories are performances,"[42] and Wounded Knee provided television images at its "Wild West" best.

[1] Rex Alan Smith, Moon Of Popping Trees: The Tragedy At Wounded Knee And The Indian Wars, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975.

[2] Victor Gold, "Of Fallen Trees and Wounded Knees," National Review, April 27, 1973.

[3] Desmond Smith, The Nation, June 25. 1973. Desmond Smith, of the Canadian Broadcasting System, likened the occupation to "group theater" by an organization like Black September (They murdered Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games).

[4] Two detailed accounts of the events leading up Wounded knee and the event itself are: Peter Matthiessen, In The Spirit of Crazy Horse: The Story of Leonard Peltier and the FBI's War on the American Indian Movement, New York: Penguin Books, 1980; and Rex Weyler, Blood of the Land: The Government and Corporate War Against First Nations, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: New Society publishers, 1992.

[5] Omaha World Herald, March 22, 1973.

[6] Neil Hickey, "Was The Truth Buried At Wounded Knee?" TV Guide, December 1, 1973, p.7.

[7] Omaha World - Herald, March 13, 1973.

[8] Desmond Smith, The Nation, June 25, 1973.

[9] Robert Burnette and John Koster, The Road To Wounded Knee, New York: Bantam Books, 1974, p.229.

[10] [Sioux Falls] Argus Leader, March 17, 1973.

[11] Omaha World - Herald, March 10, 1973.

[12] Paul H. Weaver, News and the Culture of Lying: How Journalism Really Works, New York: The Free Press, 1994, p.6.

[13] Clifford G. Christians, Kim B. Rotzoll, and Mark Fackler, Media Ethics Cases and Moral Reasoning (Third Edition), New York: Longman, 1991, p.130.

[14] Desmond Smith, The Nation, June 25, 1973. Christians, Rotzoll, Fackler, p.130.

[15] Daniel Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America, New York: Atheneum, 1961, pp.11-12.

[16] Desmond Smith, The Nation, June 25, 1973. Christians, Rotzoll, Fackler, p.130.

[17] Desmond Smith, The Nation, June 25, 1973. "no different in kind from the group theatre of the Black September men."

[18] Omaha World - Herald, March 2, 1973.

[19] James G. Abourezk, Advise & Dissent: Memoirs of South Dakota and the U.S. Senate, Chicago, Illinois: Lawrence Hill Books, 1989, p.210-11.

[20] Desmond Smith, The Nation, June 25, 1973.

[21] Omaha World - Herald, March 12, 1973.

[22] Richard Morris and Philip Wander, "Native American Rhetoric: Dancing In The Shadows of the Ghost Dance," Quarterly Journl of Speech, 76 (1990), 182.

[23] Victor Gold, "Of Fallen Trees and Wounded Knees," National Review, April 27, 1973.

[24] Terri Schultz, "Bamboozle Me Not At Wounded Knee, Harpers, 246(June 1973):48.

[25] James G. Abourezk, Advise & Dissent: Memoirs of South Dakota and the U.S. Senate, Chicago, Illinois: Lawrence Hill Books, 1989, p.214; Robert Burnette and John

Koster, The Road To Wounded Knee, New York: Bantam Books, 1974, p.229.

[26] Omaha World - Herald, March 20, 1973.

[27] Boston Globe, March 13, 1973.

[28] Omaha World - Herald, April 25, 1973, These flights were quite dangerous, planes carrying photographers were fired on when they swooped low over the hamlet, Omaha World - Herald, March 1, 1973, Bill Zimmerman, Airlift to Wounded Knee, Chicago: Swallow Press, 1976, pp. 98, 252.

[29] Omaha World Herald, March 21, 1973. For an account of the airlift operation see Bill Zimmerman, Airlift to Wounded Knee, Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1976.

[30] Omaha World - Herald, March 22, 1973.

[31] Omaha World - Herald, April 11, 1973.

[32] Time, March 26, 1973, Victor Gold, "Of Fallen Trees and Wounded Knees," National Review, April 27, 1973.

[33] Terri Schultz, "Bamboozle Me Not At Wounded Knee, Harpers, 246(June 1973):48.

[34] Bill Zimmerman, Airlift to Wounded Knee, Chicago: The Swallow Press, p.164.

[35] Neil Hickey, "Only the Sensational Stuff Got on the Air," TV Guide, 8 December 1973, p.34. Also quoted in Clifford G. Christians, Kim B. Rotzoll and Mark Fackler, Media Ethics Cases & Moral Reasoning, (Third Edition) New York: Longman, 1991, p. 129.

[36] Clifford G. Christians, Kim B. Rotzoll, and Mark Fackler, Media Ethics: Caese & Moral Reasoning (Third Edition), New York: Longman, 1991, p.132.

[37] Terri Schultz, "Bamboozle Me Not At Wounded Knee," Harpers, 246(June 1973):47.

[38] Desmond Smith, The Nation, June 25, 1973.

[39] Desmond Smith, The Nation, June 25, 1973.

[40] Omaha World - Herald, April 13, 1973.

[41] Clyde D. Dollar, "The Second Tradgedy at Wounded Knee: A 1970s Confrontation and Its Historical Roots," The American West, 10(September 1973): 7-8.

[42] Paul H. Weaver, News and the Culture of Lying. How Journalism Really Works, New York: The Free Press, 1994, pp. 2-3.

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From College Expulsion to Pulitzer Prize:

How the *New York World-Telegram*'s Fred Woltman became the "No. 1 Newspaper Specialist" on Communists

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From College Expulsion to Pulitzer Prize:

How the *New York World-Telegram*'s Fred Woltman became the "No. 1 Newspaper Specialist" on Communists

A reporter for the Scripps-Howard news chain in 1946 called the House Un-American Activities Committee in Washington, D.C., to check a person's possible Communist affiliations. The reporter was given some information, but was told to call Frederick Woltman of the *New York World-Telegram* for more details. "Woltman has more information on some of these characters than we have," a committee clerk said.[1]

Frederick Enos Woltman, a general assignment reporter, had boxes of information about Communists, Communist groups and Communist sympathizers. And he used the information to write articles telling millions of newspaper readers who and where the alleged Communists were, which groups were "fronts" for Communist activities, and, in enough cases to make him unusual, which people and groups were falsely accused.

His word was among the most credible of all for those strongly opposed to communism. His articles were circulated throughout the nation's Scripps-Howard newspapers. He stockpiled material, collecting items to support or refute the alleged Communist leanings of a person or group, and he opened his files to people doing similar work. Even local law officials and agents for the Federal Bureau of Investigation visited the *World-Telegram* building for information.

Of all the journalists who exposed Communists during the tumultous political and social climate in the 1940s and 1950s, only Frederick Woltman was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, in March 1947, for coverage of Communists. He was, as *Time* magazine declared in 1954, "long acknowledged the No. 1 newspaper specialist on Reds."[2] Today, few people know the name of Frederick Woltman. But his work attracted great attention during an era when many United

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[1] "Senator McCarthy," *New York World-Telegram & Sun*, 12 July 1954.

[2] *Time*, 2 August 1954, 55.

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States' citizens searched everywhere to identify those who seemed to support communism, Russia or Red China. At the *World-Telegram*, Scripps-Howard's most prominent newspaper, Woltman went about the task of exposing Communists and "fellow travelers" with enthusiasm and energy matched by few journalists. The *Daily Worker* called him "Freddie the Fink."

Earl Browder, one-time editor of the *Daily Worker* and leader of the Communist Party in America, called Woltman "the journalistic unmentionable." In his book Teheran, Our Path in War and Peace, Browder said Woltman "issues public orders to some of the most powerful men and women in America — and they jump to obey him with an alacrity they would never display to an order from the President of the United States!"[3]

Perhaps the most surprising aspect about Woltman was how little he resembled the stereotypical, right-wing fanatic opposed to communism. Even in the journalism field, Woltman was unusual for his education, his work habits, strong reporting and editing skills, and for the many journalism awards he won. Woltman's ability to write and investigate, his knack for collecting and sifting through evidence, and his dedication stretched his stint as a cub reporter into a 28-year career in New York and, through the Scripps-Howard chain, across the nation.

A study of Woltman's career helps provide insight to reporting in a time period considered one of the worst in journalism history. This study does not glorify his work in any way; it does reflect how reporters during this period can not be considered with a simple classification. Woltman was not uneducated. He was not a lousy reporter for a small newspaper. He was not even predictable in his placing the "Communist" label on groups. He wrote many articles defending groups against unsubstantiated charges by red-baiters.

This study relies upon the *World-Telegram & Sun* morgue files, which were once stored at the University of Missouri and the University of South Carolina until being destroyed in 1988. The files contained many of Woltman's stories, letters and clippings from other publications.[4]

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[3] "Browder Read Out of Party," *World-Telegram*, 11 June 1945. The book was the American Communists' official bible for a year before Browder was denounced in the *Daily Worker* for "his desire not to offend the big capitalists," among other criticisms.

[4] These files are now in the collection of the author, who removed (with permission) them and some other items shortly before the collection was sold as scrap paper because it was deteriorating. Scripps-Howard bought the name, the "good will" and the circulation lists of *The Sun* on 4 January 1950. *The Sun*, founded by Benjamin H. Day as a penny newspaper in 1833 and later owned by Charles A. Dana, was sold by owner

FROM TEACHER TO REPORTER

Frederick Enos Woltman was born March 16, 1905, in York, Pennsylvania, to Enos Frederick and Ella Stayer Woltman. Enos Frederick was a druggist. The family moved to Pittsburgh when Fred was a boy, and he was graduated from high school with high honors. He received a B.A., studying political science and philosophy, from the University of Pittsburgh in 1927, graduating magna cum laude. Woltman completed his master's degree work in 1928 from the university and wrote his thesis on the political philosophy of John Taylor. The next school year he worked as a graduate assistant in the department of philosophy, teaching and studying for a doctorate. But two articles he wrote during his tenure in the Ph.D. program about attacks against striking workers in Pennsylvania led to the end of his academic career.

Woltman and another writer characterized the police as "cossacks" in the December 1928 issue of the *American Mercury*in response to clashes with strikers.[5] His article in the *Nation*, "Murder by Coal and Iron Police," appeared March 20, 1929. Pennsylvania steelmakers were incensed and asked the university to end its connection with Woltman.[6] Woltman was dismissed as a graduate assistant. In 1935, the American Association of University Professors voted to blacklist the university because of its dismissal of Woltman and three other professors for similar reasons.[7] But in 1929, the action meant that Woltman, the graduate student, needed a job — preferably, one that was far from Pittsburgh.

Westbrook Pegler, at one time a *World-Telegram* writer and later a nationally syndicated columnist, offered another reason for Woltman's dismissal. Pegler said a university student club had invited a controversial speaker and was ordered not to hold the meeting on university property. Woltman served as the club's faculty adviser, according to Pegler, and the meeting was

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Thomas W. Dewart to Scripps-Howard. Ironically, it was Dewart's father, as president of The Sun Corp., who sold the *Telegram* to Scripps-Howard in 1927.

[5] Frederick Woltman and William L. Nunn, "Cossacks," *American Mercury*, December 1928, 399-406.

[6] *World-Telegram & Sun* prepared obituary for Woltman.

[7] "Professors Ban Pittsburgh U," *World-Telegram*, 31 December 1935.

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held on a vacant lot. Pegler said Woltman told him this led to his dismissal.[8] A writer for *Editor & Publisher* quoted Woltman in February 1947 as saying he was dismissed as an instructor in philosophy "over what was known as a 'Liberal Club incident.' "[9]

Both versions appear correct. The articles probably were the beginning of Woltman's exit, and the "Liberal Club incident" provided additional reasons for his dismissal.[10] In any case, Woltman was unemployed. But his work attracted the attention of Roy Howard of the Scripps-Howard chain. Howard, editor of the *Telegram*, hired Woltman in late 1929 as a general assignment reporter. After only several months on the job, Woltman, along with two other reporters, investigated the conditions in Magistrates' Courts. Their findings led to a grand jury inquiry and charges of office-buying by local judges.[11]

Woltman's skill as an investigative reporter paid a large dividend in May 1933. The newspaper, now called the *World-Telegram* after Scripps-Howard bought the *World* from the Pulitzer family, received a Pulitzer Prize for "meritorious public service" rendered in four separate series, including articles by Woltman and Joseph Lilly that exposed illegal practices in real estate bonds.[12] The revelations saved millions of dollars for bondholders, the newspaper said.[13] Woltman also received a Pulitzer honorable mention in 1934. He was recognized for "clear, exact and understanding writing" in stories during 1933 about the status of closed banks in the New York suburban area after the national bank holiday.[14]

Finding a Reporting Niche

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[8] Westbrook Pegler, "Scripps Heiress' Attack on 'Anti-McCarthy' Series," *New York Journal-American*, 28 July 1954.

[9] Helen M. Stanton, "Woltman Keeps Tabs on 'Red Front' Groups," *Editor & Publisher* (15 February 1947): 25.

[10] A story in the Sept. 1, 1929, *Telegram*, while mentioning that there was not a definite reason given for Woltman's firing, said that in addition to his activities with the Liberal Club, university officials were "wrought up" about the article in *American Mercury* written by Woltman and another professor. The *World-Telegram* in a 1946 article said Woltman was fired after Pennsylvania Governor John S. Fisher objected to the articles.

[11] "E.J. Flynn Witness Before Bronx Jury on Office Buying," *Telegram*, 14 October 1930.

[12] "*World-Telegram* Wins Award of Pulitzer Prize for Service." *World-Telegram*, 2 May 1933.

[13] *World-Telegram*, 6 May 1947, 3.

[14] "Actor Mirrors Hospital Life, Gets Play Prize." *World-Telegram*, 8 May 1934.

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In the late 1930s Woltman discovered his reporting niche. America's international concerns were potential war in Europe and the Communist control of Russia and China. Some vocal Americans questioned the effectiveness of a democracy with a free enterprise system. The United States economy was struggling after years of economic disasters from the stock market crash, the closing of banks, and the destruction of farms by sandstorms. Other Americans were scared that Communists would take control in the United States. Only a small number of Communist Party members had taken control of Russia and, as many argued, the same thing could happen in America. Newspaper coverage of communism expanded as public concern grew. Many reporters covering the communism scare, including Woltman, were called "red-baiters."

The late 1930s also saw a dramatic change in the *World-Telegram*'s editorial viewpoint. The newspaper supported President Franklin Roosevelt in his 1936 re-election bid, but soon did a "180-degree turn," said Fred Cook, a *World-Telegram* reporter and copy editor who worked with Woltman. "Some said it was because Roy Howard was miffed at not being named Ambassador to the Court of St. James's; others suggested that the New Deal's encouragement of unions was the cause of the rift."[15] In any case, Cook said the newspaper after 1936 "was almost virulently anti-Democrat, and its favorite tactic was to tie the supposed Communist menace to Democratic Party coattails."

The New Deal's encouragement of unions was a sore point for many newspaper publishers. Besides the unions throughout the newspaper's other department, the newspaper guilds, representing the newsroom employees, were begun in the 1930s. Woltman was one of the founders of the New York City guild. Yet he and others were bothered by the influx of Communists in the union, and their push for power. Late in the 1930s, Woltman and others formed a secret anti-Communist caucus in the New York local of the American Newspaper Guild.[16] In the early years of the caucus, members were so concerned about expulsion from the

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[15] Cook, 22.

[16] Oliver Pilat, Pegler: Angry Man of the Press (Boston: Beacon Press), v. Other "founding fathers" of the anti-Communist group included Pilat; David Davidson, who later became national chairman of the Writers Guild of America; and Ferdinand Lundberg, who wrote several books.

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Guild that they met secretly until the group was strong enough to withstand pressure.

Woltman detested the influence of the Communists in the guild, and he saw the union split into two basic groups: Communists (and their supporters) and those who opposed them. While Woltman was a member of the latter group, he was on good enough terms with both sides that he was elected guild president to try to pull the sides together. His attempts failed, and he resigned. The experience caused Woltman to withdraw from the guild for more than a decade, and it strongly shape his views about communism. Heading into the 1940s, Woltman was a strong opponent of Communists. They would feel his wrath for the next two decades.

Changes in the *World-Telegram*'s editorial view, from liberal to conservative, and the public change in Woltman, from the perceived Pittsburgh liberal to the perceived conservative journalist, were lamented by many observers. The Rev. Guy Emery Shipler, editor in the 1940s of a weekly magazine, *The Churchman*, called it "one of the tragedies of modern journalism that the *World-Telegram*, stemming from two great liberal roots, should have departed so far from those traditions of freedom that it indulges in pinning the Communist label on any liberal American with whom it happens to disagree." While Shipler said Woltman was not responsible for the newspaper's policy, he added, "You are responsible for selling out to it."[17]

In Fact, a weekly publication by media critic George Seldes, said Woltman "now devotes himself to the cause of native American fascism, red-baiting every liberal and democratic idea, man and movement in the United States, outrivaling the sewer journalism of the Hearst press."[18] Shipler said Woltman attempted "to frighten all liberals by jumping out around corners, making faces and screaming 'Communist.' "[19]

In a letter to the *World-Telegram*, Dr. Carl Herman Voss, decrying what he felt was the loss of Woltman's liberal spirit, said: "To more timid souls [Woltman] was a knight in shining armor whose lance was tilted against the windmills of reaction, and when he was ousted from the faculty of the University of Pittsburgh more than 15 years ago, many a student admired him for his courage and convictions. But how the mighty do fall!"[20]

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[17] Letter from Shipler to Woltman, 19 July 1946.

[18] Seldes often supported Shipler and *The Churchman*. A report about Woltman in *In Fact* on 22 May 1944 includes the headline, "Portrait of a Newspaper Liar."

[19] "The *World-Telegram* Bogey-man," *The Churchman*, 1 January 1947, New York, 4.

WORKING TOWARD A PULITZER

> When young reporters joined the staff of this paper they sat, with mingled awe and surprise, watching the men who drifted into the city room to talk to Fred Woltman. Some of the visitors looked like FBI men, some like counter-intelligence agents of the United States armed services and some like foreign agents.
>
> The visitors were just what they looked like.
>
> This was the world Fred Woltman lived in.[21]

Energetic and hard-working, Woltman was especially driven in his coverage of communism. "Whenever he got a story that cast new unfavorable light on a communist or a communist sympathizer, Woltman would prance around the newsroom like a kid with a new toy," said Herb Kamm, a World-Telegram editor.[22]

For background material, Woltman created hundreds of files. He highlighted sections in newspaper or magazine stories with his red pencil. He also collected stationery with lists of organization sponsors, which he used to check a person's background by the groups he supported. The files included pages of Woltman's notes, some hand-written, others typed as memos to editors to explain stories.

Woltman used the following terms and working definitions in his coverage: *Communist party member*: person needs a party card or public admission to prove. *Communist*: person whose statements follow the party line one hundred percent. *Pro-communist*: person who is thoroughly sold on the communist point of view. *Fellow traveler*: person who supports the projects of the Communist Party. *Innocents*: people who lend names or aid to Communist-sponsored programs without knowing the purpose or backing of the activity.[23]

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[20] Carl Herman Voss. Letter reportedly was not printed in the *World-Telegram*, but later was included in *The Churchman*, 1 January 1947, 5.

[21] Woltman's prepared obituary, *World-Telegram*, 20 February 1958.

[22] Interview with Herb Kamm, March 1989.

[23] Stanton, *Editor & Publisher*, 15 February 1947.

Clearing The Names of 'Non-Communists'

Woltman not only identified groups he claimed supported communism, he also "cleared" the names of others. In 1956, some charged that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was a militant group and that Communists might have infiltrated it. In an editorial the *World-Telegram* said, "One widespread smear against the NAACP can be debunked. Staff writer Frederick Woltman testifies the NAACP is not involved with the Communists."[24] In a two-part series about the NAACP, Woltman wrote: "On the charge of communism, this writer, who was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in journalism for exposing Red infiltration in this country during 1946, has first-hand knowledge." The Communist Party, Woltman said, tried to infiltrate the NAACP for more than 15 years. "Just as persistently, the NAACP leaders have sternly resisted Communist inroads."[25]

His defense of certain groups included those with whom he disagreed. When a letter writer questioned the loyalty of the National Council Against Conscription, Woltman said that "by no stretch of the facts" could the group be considered a Communist front. "One might well disagree with them," he said. "In fact, I do personally. But I think it most unfair to stigmatize them in the slightest degree as Communist or disloyal."[26]

Reporter Fred Cook did not approve of the newspaper's coverage of communism, though he respected Woltman. Cook wrote about the Mafia and its political ties. He said he was "disgusted" by the newspaper's "more serious endeavor of brainwashing the American public." Yet Cook said he respected Woltman both as a reporter and a rewrite man. "Unlike some of his fellow Red-baiters, [Woltman] did not manufacture communist horror tales out of whole cloth, and he frankly admitted in private conversations that the Red Scare was wildly exaggerated."[27]

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[24] "Tough, But Not Red," *World-Telegram & Sun* editorial, 26 May 1956.

[25] Woltman, "The NAACP: What is its ultimate goal." *World-Telegram & Sun*, 19 May 1956. Part of a two-part series, "NAACP: Fight for Freedom." May 12 & 19, 1956.

[26] Letter from Woltman to The Rev. Robert Fister Weiskotten, St. John's Lutheran Church, Richmond Hill, New York City, on 16 May 1951.

Cook remembered an example. Woltman had been out the previous night in New York with *Journal-American* reporter Howard Rushmore. He told Cook an astounding story. Rushmore had told Woltman about an article he wrote for a national magazine. In it, Rushmore proposed that three "Communists" (Lauchlin Currie, a presidential adviser; Alger Hiss, a State Department official who had been imprisoned on perjury charges; and Harry Dexter White, a Treasury Department official) once worked together during President Roosevelt's administration.

> "You can't do that," Woltman told Rushmore. '"They never worked together anywhere in government, and two of them never worked in the White House."
>
> "Oh, I know that," Rushmore had answered airily, "but it makes a good story. Besides, Hiss has been convicted, and dead men (Currie and White) can't sue, can they?"
>
> As he told the story (to Cook), Woltman's hands fluttered and his rubbery lips flapped up and down. "Can you imagine that?" he asked. "Can you believe it?" His voice rose in incredulity.[28]

Yet others blamed Woltman for similar actions. A writer in *The Churchman* listed the path for liberals during Woltman's era:[29]

> Take any person who has a longstanding reputation for liberalism. Let him make public utterances that reflect his innate love of peace and all the people of the world. What usually happens is this:
>
> 1) Woltman of the Scripps-Howard chain aligns him with "Communist front" organizations, true or not (it is significant that Woltman doesn't attack real Communists; he attacks liberals);
>
> 2) Woltman's articles are reprinted in the Roman Catholic and secular press with editorial embellishments;
>
> 3) the liberal is looked at questioningly by those who believe what they see in print in newspapers and never check the facts;

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[27] Cook, 23.

[28] Cook, 24-25.

[29] The writer is listed as "Fifi Nella." "The Ravin'," *The Churchman*, 15 September 1947, 15.

4) he is then blatantly called a Communist, not only by reactionaries, but by scared citizens given easily to name-calling;

5) his denial of sympathy with or knowledge of Marxian doctrine is laughed off. The liberal either hangs his head or he continues to fight against odds for what he thinks is right and just and peacemaking.

Sparking Protests and Winning Awards

A story in 1946 vaulted Woltman into the national spotlight. On October 13, 1946, a Sunday, Louis F. Budenz, former editor of the *Daily Worker*, told a group in Detroit that the national leader of Communists in the United States had never been identified. "There is operating in this country a secret agent of the Kremlin who directs all Communists' activities in the United States," he said. "This man never shows his face. Communist leaders never see him, but they follow his orders implicitly."[30] Budenz had abandoned communism about a year earlier, shortly after the expulsion of Earl Browder as the United States' party director.

The New York newspapers led a search to reveal the man's identity. Woltman and the *World-Telegram* broke the story four days later. The man was Gerhard Eisler, known in the United States as Hans Berger, Woltman said in a front-page story. Woltman had "discovered" Eisler and identified him to the country.

"The country's top-flight reporters were aghast at the beat," the *World-Telegram* said in a story eight months later. "Even Mr. Budenz was shocked."[31] Budenz had mentioned the man once wrote several articles for *The Communist*, a magazine of the American Communist Party. Woltman read copies of the magazine and found "Hans Berger" mentioned in 1943 and 1944. It reminded him of a Communist meeting in May 1945 in New York in Browder's final public appearance before he was kicked out of the party. Woltman covered the meeting.

"See that little man over there?" whispered an informant. "That's Hans Berger. He's a mysterious guy. Lots of power in the party. But nobody seems to know anything about him." In

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[30] "How Woltman Won Pulitzer Prize for Unmasking Communists," *World-Telegram*, 6 May 1947, 3.

[31] "How Woltman Won Pulitzer Prize for Unmasking Communists." The newpaper and other sources vary on the spelling of Eisler's first name. It was spelled as "Gerhard," "Gerhart" and "Gerhardt."

1946, searching for the identity of the nation's Communist leader, Woltman made several calls and learned that Berger had a sister, Ruth (Eisler) Fischer. "And the manhunt was over," the newspaper said. "Miss Fischer was eager to finger the brother she had grown to hate." Miss Fisher said her brother "may still be top man in the German Communist Party."[32]

For breaking the story, Woltman also laid claim to journalism's most prestigious award, a Pulitzer Prize. He was given the award May 5, 1947, for "consistent exposure of undercover methods communists use to spread their insidious propaganda," the *World-Telegram* said.[33]

Robert Ruark, the reporter and novelist whose desk was beside Woltman's, described Woltman in a column shortly after the award was announced:

> At 42, Mr. Woltman is getting alarmingly fat, and his yellow locks aren't long for this world. There may be people alive who wear more horrible neckties, but I don't think so. His shirttail has a tendency to come out of his pants. In the throes of composition, our new Pulitzer man is something to see.
>
> "He is the only man in the world who can talk on two telephones while simultaneously taking notes in pencil, playing the typewriter, smoking a foot long cigar and conducting a brisk argument about some aspect of the circus.[34]

Woltman received congratulations on the Pulitzer Prize award from J. Edgar Hoover, chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and New York Governor Thomas Dewey. Hoover, in praising Woltman, said, "There can be no more effective weapon against communism than the exposure of its designs in a free press in a factual manner."[35] Said Roy Howard: "I know of no instance in the history of the Pulitzer Prize in which this recognition of great public service rendered through straight reporting has been bestowed more deservedly."[36] Eisler, however, accused Woltman and Howard Rushmore of the *Journal-American* of "writing lies." Eisler later fled the country.

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[32] "How Woltman Won Pulitzer Prize for Unmasking Communists."

[33] "How Woltman Won Pulitzer Prize for Unmasking Communists." Woltman was the fourth *World-Telegram* reporter to win the prize in the past decade. Others were Thomas L. Stokes, 1938; S. Burton Heath, 1939; and Westbrook Pegler, 1940.

[34] Robert C Ruark, "Close to Fame." *World-Telegram*, 9 May 1941.

[35] "FBI Chief Praises Woltman For Fair Exposure of Reds," *World-Telegram*, 6 May 1947, 1.

[36] Ibid.

Woltman's identification of Eisler was not much different from his reporting in earlier years, but it attracted more attention. Kamm said the Pulitzer Prize surprised the *World-Telegram* staff, and he believed it was based on Woltman's many years of work, rather than just the articles in 1946.

Woltman covered various assignments throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, but he would gain the national spotlight again in 1954. That year, Woltman took on perhaps his greatest challenge. He was asked to analyze the actions of Senator Joseph McCarthy, the most visible Red-hunter of all. For Woltman, this story was a little different. McCarthy had been a personal friend.

THE PROJECT: EVALUATE McCARTHY'S ACTIONS

In January 1954 Woltman was asked to study and evaluate for the Scripps-Howard chain the Communist-hunting of Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin, a Republican. The idea was proposed by Dan Burrows of *The Albuquerque Tribune*, a Scripps-Howard newspaper. Woltman was relieved of general assignment work to concentrate on the project.[37]

At first, Woltman did not want to do the analysis, saying it required too much research and that he was bored with the subject and thought others also were bored. McCarthy had been investigated numerous times, and Woltman doubted whether new material could be found.[38] He changed his mind, though, as McCarthy's battle against the Army escalated. The senator accused Secretary of the Army Robert T. Stevens of protecting "Communist coddlers" in the armed service. Still, Woltman claimed he began the project with no fixed ideas.[39]

The senator and the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter first met in April 1950 in Washington when Woltman invited McCarthy to dinner. McCarthy and some friends visited Woltman in his Hotel Congressional apartment several times a week in 1950.[40] At the April dinner, a young woman asked McCarthy: "Tell me senator, just how long ago did you discover communism?" As Woltman listened, McCarthy reportedly replied: "Two and a half months!"[41]

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[37] "Story of the Month" in a Scripps-Howard newsletter, October 1954, page 3. *World-Telegram* morgue.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

The senator commanded national attention in February 1950 after a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia. He held a piece of paper in the air and claimed to have the names of 205 card-carrying Communists in the State Department. He later reduced the number to 57, then upgraded it to 81. McCarthy did not keep a copy of the speech, though he searched for a recording of it. Woltman remembered: "On a number of occasions — mostly in my apartment in the Congressional (Hotel) — I heard McCarthy and his advisers wrack their brains for some lead as to what he said in that Wheeling speech. He had no copy. . . . He could not find the notes. . . . The Senator's staff could find no one who could recall what he'd said precisely. He finally hit on the idea of appealing to ham radio operators in the area who might have made a recording of the speech. He could find none."[42]

Woltman said McCarthy could have been stopped early in his Communism campaign, but that President Harry Truman, a Democrat, made a serious mistake in ignoring the senator. McCarthy had sent the president a telegram about the State Department's "57 card-holding Communists." Woltman said McCarthy was "the creature of his adversaries. . . . For the President ignored his wire. . . . Had he turned it over to the FBI for investigation, Mr. Truman would have taken the play away from Mr. McCarthy."[43]

Many conservatives supported McCarthy's actions, particularly because he created problems for Truman. In 1952, the country elected Dwight Eisenhower, a Republican, as president. McCarthy said he would let Eisenhower, as Republican leader, direct the fight against Communists in the coming years. But the "new McCarthy" strongly resembled the old one. He was as much an embarrassment for Eisenhower as he was for Truman.

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[40] Woltman, "The McCarthy Balance Sheet: A Major LiabilityTo Anti-Communism,' " *World-Telegram & Sun*, 12 July 1954. Woltman also was given information for his articles by McCarthy and his staff. A 19 June 1952 memorandum from Woltman to the editors about possible security risks on the American staff of the United Nations says: "Confidentially, from Roy M. Cohn." Woltman could meet with McCarthy because he was in Washington, D.C., covering a congressional hearing.

[41] James Rorty and Moshe Decter, McCarthy and the Communists (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1954), 151.

[42] Richard Rovere, Senator Joe McCarthy (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 127.

[43] "About McCarthy," *Time*, 19 July 1954, 62.

'The Train's Way Off The Track'

Woltman traveled to Washington in 1954 to interview old friends and sources, those who disliked communism as much as Woltman did. "They were appalled over the mess Joe had managed to stir up," he said. "As one Senator, a staunch anti-Red, put it: 'The train's way off the track and nobody knows how to get it back on.' "[44]

The *World-Telegram & Sun* gave Woltman a private office in late February. For three weeks, he examined hundreds of stories about McCarthy. Woltman read transcripts from the McCarthy hearings. He studied McCarthy's first investigation of the "Voice of America" and the U.S. information program abroad. "It proved to me the ineptness of the McCarthy-Roy Cohn-David Schine team," he said.[45] Later, in the final article in his McCarthy series, he would conclude that the inquiry was "one of the most disgraceful, scatter-brained, inept, misleading and unfair investigations in Congressional annals."[46]

In April, the articles were ready for publication. He had enough material for 40 or 50 articles, but pared it down to five. Then he sent a memo to Scripps-Howard executives, in Washington for a meeting, to tell them his conclusion. "My conclusion, that Sen. McCarthy was harming the cause of anti-Communism, was my own and mine alone," Woltman said.

Scripps-Howard delayed the series' release while the McCarthy-Army hearings were pending. Woltman took a month's vacation, and, as usual, he headed for Sarasota, Florida. After vacation, Woltman traveled to Washington to view several sessions of the Army hearings. He turned in the articles during the July 4 weekend, and copies were sent to Roy Howard.

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[44] "Story of the Month."

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

Woltman said no policy changes were made in the articles from his original version.[47] The series started July 12, 1954, with a page-wide headline, "The McCarthy Balance Sheet." Above was an overline, "A Prize-Winning Reporter Presents" and, to the left above the story, a two-column headline read: "A Major Liability To Anti-Communism." Woltman's first story, datelined Washington, began:

> Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy has become a major liability to the cause of anti-communism.
>
> That is the conclusion of this writer after three months of rechecking the Senator's record since he first embarked on the Red hunt Feb. 9, 1950 – soon after which we got to be friends.
>
> From the start, the record shows, Sen. McCarthy has played into the hands of the Communists. He has made the going tougher for the many others who long before had been fighting to stop the spread of communism at home and abroad.
>
> He has distorted the present-day picture of communism out of all semblance to reality. And, thereby, he has spread a blanket of confusion over an area where clear thinking is most imperative.[48]

For five days, Woltman examined various McCarthy battles and concluded the senator "makes a play for headlines by raising the cry of treason and espionage without producing the evidence."[49] The articles are not particularly revealing. Their impact came from the conclusions reached by Woltman because he was so well-regarded among those opposed to communism.

"Few articles have stirred up such interest," a 1958 *World-Telegram & Sun* prepared obituary for Woltman said. "From the time of their publication, Sen. McCarthy's star seemed to lost (sic) its former brilliance. To Mr. Woltman, Sen. McCarthy was a sort of Johnny-come-lately. It always seemed strange to him, after 12 years of anti-Communist efforts, to see the Wisconsin legislator acting as if the Reds had been in existence only since 1950."[50]

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[47] "Story of the Month," 3.

[48] Woltman, "The McCarthy Balance Sheet," 12 July 1954.

[49] Woltman, "The McCarthy Balance Sheet." 13 July 1954.

[50] *World-Telegram* morgue. Filed in the prepared obituary section

Woltman, in the series, said McCarthy "has introduced a slam-bang, rabble-rousing, hit-and-run technique into the serious business of exposing the Communist conspiracy. He has distracted public attention from the world's critical danger spots. Essentially he's no investigator. He's a headline-maker."[51]

The series "stirred up an even bigger furor than they had expected," *Time* said.[52] Critics included E.W. Scripps' granddaughter, Nackey Scripps Loeb. Mrs. Loeb sent a telegram in July to the Scripps-Howard executives, saying: "[Woltman's] smearing of Senator McCarthy [is] rotten, biased journalism, which would make my grandfather, E.W. Scripps . . . turn in his grave with disgust and shame." And, in a personal telegram to Woltman, she said, "We are ashamed of ever having known you."[53]

Mrs. Loeb was one of six life beneficiaries in Scripps' will.[54] Her husband, William "Bill" Loeb, was publisher of the Manchester (N.H.) *Union Leader*, which syndicated columnist Westbrook Pegler called "one of the most belligerent anti-Communist, anti-double-dome papers in the country."[55] The Loebs ran a chain of newspapers in New Hampshire and Vermont. Publisher Howard responded to the telegram by saying, "Mrs. Loeb has no connection, direct or indirect, with the management of the concern. She has just the same right to send a telegram as my cook or anyone else. As for Bill Loeb, he is still galled because he can't get his camel nose in this tent."[56]

Pegler, joining the battle of words in his King Features syndicate column, said that "although Woltman does know his way around the Marxist slums he never has been regarded as an authentic bolo himself. Moreover, Fred just doesn't write well enough to swing any weight."[57] Pegler also called Woltman a "somewhat specialized handyman" of Charles Scripps, brother of Mrs. Loeb, and Jack R. Howard, president of the Scripps-Howard chain, and said that "everyone who knew the present slant of Scripps-Howard knew what to expect" from Woltman's articles.[58] Woltman replied that Pegler was never bashful about getting information from him.[59]

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[51] Ibid.

[52] *Time*, 2 August 1954, 55.

[53] *Time*, 2 August 1954. The criticism from Mrs. Loeb was published in the Loeb newspapers and then was distributed nationally through Pegler's column and the article in *Time*. "Of course this is a family row," Pegler concluded, "but when the sugar bowl flies through the window and cries of 'you're another' reach the neighbors, the fun is unconfined."

[54] Westbrook Pegler, "Scripps Heiress' Attack on 'Anti-McCarthy' Series. *New York Journal-American*. 28 July 1954.

[55] *Time*, 2 August 1954. Bill Loeb once wrote that "the only good Communist is a dead Communist.' Eric P. Veblen, The Manchester Union Leader in New Hampshire Elections (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1975), 2.

[56] Time, 2 August 1954.

The McCarthy series, Mrs. Loeb said, gave aid and comfort to the Russians. She asked her brother how Woltman had been converted to view McCarthy as a hindrance in the Communist fight. Two years before, Woltman had spent an evening talking to the Loebs in praise of McCarthy and his methods, she said.[60]

Monitoring Response To The Series

More than 1,000 letters were sent to the *World-Telegram & Sun* office about Woltman's series, and the newspaper printed a sample on two full pages on separate days. Letters were addressed to "Hymie" Woltman, "Jewish" Woltman and "Tovarishii [meaning, comrade] Fred Woltman and Roy Howard." For a week, a newspaper employee was assigned full time to answer phone calls from people opposed to Woltman's view.[61] "The series made a terrific impact, greater than anything I'd done" in 25 years, Woltman said. "My pro-McCarthy friends debated whether they'd ever speak to me again; or shake hands if we met in a restaurant."[62]

Stanley High, author of "Methodism's Pink Fringe" in *Reader's Digest* in February 1950, called the stories "a major contribution by the free press acting, with courage above and beyond the call of expediency, on behalf of all our freedom."[63] Anna M. Rosenberg wrote that

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[57] Pegler. Of course, Pegler was known for his insults. He once refered to William Randolph Hearst in 1940 as a "never to be adequately damned demagogue and historic scoundrel." Pegler later worked for Hearst. Pegler also once was a close friend of Heywood Broun. In Broun's final years, Pegler wrote columns that condemned Broun and called him a communist.

[58] Pegler.

[59] "Story of the Month," 4.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

"Woltman is doing a sober, objective, thorough, unemotional job. He is offering enlightenment and not venom." She predicted the series "will make a substantial impact on the course of American public opinion during the next few years."[64] Ms. Rosenberg had been accused in late 1950 of Communist-front affiliations during her Senate nomination hearing to be Assistant Secretary of Defense. McCarthy was a member of the Senate committee that heard the testimony.

The fact that a reporter well-known for his anti-Communist views attacked McCarthy brought the greatest significance to the series. "If Mr. Woltman were to say that the activities of Sen. McCarthy have been a good thing for the country, it would silence the latter's critics," said the Pittsburgh *Catholic*, the official publication of the Pittsburgh Diocese.[65] Others believed Woltman changed his views about McCarthy for possible financial rewards. They said he sold out for "30 pieces of silver"[66] or $100,000.[67]

More than half of the letters and telegrams criticizing Woltman's series were unsigned. "Many were vituperative, bordering on the venomous," the newspaper said. One writer warned: "Stop smearing Sen. McCarthy if you don't want to get castrated. This is a rather severe measure. But we have to do it, yes; over in the Jersey meadows. And you will walk back."[68] Some writers said they would not buy another copy of the *World-Telegram & Sun*, including one man who said he had for several years been reading the weekday and Sunday editions. The newspaper did not publish on Sundays.

In late July, more than 2,000 people gathered in New York City to honor McCarthy and associate Roy Cohn. Two speakers, including William F. Buckley Jr., attacked Woltman's series. Buckley described Woltman as the "world's most easily brainwashed Pulitzer Prize winner."[69]

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[63] "Pro and Con on 'The McCarthy Balance Sheet,' " *World-Telegram & Sun*, 17 July 1954.

[64] Ibid.

[65] "Catholic Editor Hails Appraisal of McCarthy," *World-Telegram & Sun*, 21 July 1954. The column in the *Catholic* was written by editor John B. Collins.

[66] Ibid.

[67] "Story of the Month," 3.

[68] "Many Blasts Unsigned," *World-Telegram & Sun*, 17 July 1954.

[69] "2000 Honor Cohn and Sen. McCarthy," *World-Telegram & Sun*, 29 July 1954. A reporter from the *World-Telegram & Sun* attended the meeting and typed a seven-page letter to Woltman that described the

Sending A Signal To Republican Newspapers

The blast from Woltman was the third major attack in 1954 on McCarthy's credibility. Famed broadcaster Edward R. Murrow criticized McCarthy during the "See It Now" television show on CBS on March 9, 1954, saying McCarthy's actions "have caused alarm and dismay amongst our allies abroad and given considerable comfort to our enemies."[70] That same day Ralph Flanders, a Republican from Vermont, blistered McCarthy on the Senate floor, saying: "He dons war paint; he goes into his war dance; he emits his war whoops; he goes forth to battle and proudly returns with the scalp of a pink Army dentist."[71]

A key factor in McCarthy's decline was that he expanded his accusations to include members of the Eisenhower administration. Many newspapers directed by Republican publishers began to change their views of McCarthy. Edwin R. Bayley, in Joe McCarthy and The Press, said Woltman's (and, through his prominence, that of the entire Scripps-Howard chain) change from support to condemnation of McCarthy was "the most spectacular about-face" in the nation's newspaper coverage.[72] The *World-Telegram & Sun*, in an editorial, said the stories did not represent a change in Scripps-Howard's editorial policy. "It seems transparently obvious, however, that Scripps-Howard executives had simply decided that McCarthy was harming rather than helping the Republican party and that it was time to get rid of him," Bayley said.

The importance of Woltman's series, coming months after Murrow's courageous show, can be measured in its impact among Republicans and McCarthy supporters. "It was an important signal to other Republican newspapers and to Senate Republicans," Bayley said. "If so resolute

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meeting. The reporter, indentified on the letter as "Alvarez," said that reporter Victor Lasky said: "Freddy should be here. This crowd would lynch him."

[70] "Murrow Leads McCarthy in Row Here, 19-1," *World-Telegram & Sun*, 10 March 1954.

[71] Joseph E. Persico, Edward R. Murrow — An American Original (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1988), 393.

[72] Edwin R. Bayley, Joe McCarthy and the Press (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 174-175.

a Commie-fighter as Woltman could turn against McCarthy, it was a safe move for all. Without this switch by Scripps-Howard and other moderate Republican newspapers, it is doubtful that the Eisenhower administration and the moderate Republicans in the Senate could have steeled themselves to the ordeal of censuring McCarthy."[73]

In analyzing McCarthy, Woltman reached some conclusions that applied to his reporting as well. Times were changing, and the importance of the Communism beat was diminishing. "The fact is, there's nothing today like the Red climate in America of 10 years ago," he said. "The public is alert to the Communist conspiracy. The party-liner, who operated openly — and brazenly — in official circles in the 1930s, has lost most of the intellectuals."[74]

On December 2, 1954, nine months after Murrow's famous show and five months after Woltman's series, the U.S. Senate declared that Joseph R. McCarthy "tended to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute, to obstruct the constitutional processes of the Senate and to impair its dignity, and such conduct is hereby condemned."[75] The vote was 67-22.

End of A Career

Woltman still was working hard in 1957, but his career suddenly ended, less than three years after his powerful series denouncing McCarthy. In April 1957, in the newsroom, Woltman stood talking to reporters Bill Michelfelder and Fred Cook. "[Woltman] was speaking rapidly, as was his custom," Cook recalled. "And in mid-sentence, his lips continued to move, but no words came out. He got the most terrified look in his eye and seemed to be trying to say, 'What's the matter with me?' At least his hands were making that questioning gesture."

Woltman was rushed to a nearby hospital; he had suffered a stroke. Ironically, that same day, McCarthy entered a Washington hospital, suffering from hepatitis. McCarthy died soon afterward, on May 2, of acute hepatic failure. Woltman would survive for another decade, but he was left with aphasia, unable to read or write. For several years, Woltman was a patient at the Institute of Living in Connecticut and at Happiness House in Sarasota, Florida, where he learned to read and speak again. But he still suffered from serious speech difficulties.

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[73] Bayley, 174.

[74] "About McCarthy," *Time*, 19 July 19, 1954, 62.

[75] Persico, p. 393.

Woltman retired from the *World-Telegram & Sun* staff, and he settled permanently in Sarasota in 1959. Despite his speech difficulties, Woltman said he was popular with other retired newspapermen and writers in Sarasota. He said they all wanted to talk and he could only listen. The writers' group, including MacKinlay Kantor, a Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, met for lunch on Fridays at a restaurant in Sarasota. During the final years of his life, Woltman learned the latest news from New York City in letters from a long-time friend, Sou Chan. Visitors came to Woltman's residence to do research from his reference materials.[76]

A book by McCarthy aide Roy Cohn in 1968 described Woltman as "the late Scripps-Howard journalist," and Woltman underlined the section with his red pencil. A story in the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* about the book's error tells of Woltman's speech problems and includes only four words in a quotation from Woltman. In reference to McCarthy and Woltman entering hospitals the same day, Woltman said simply, "He died; I didn't."[77]

Woltman died of a heart attack March 5, 1970, at Sarasota Memorial Hospital, eleven days shy of his sixty-fifth birthday.[78] Cook said Woltman had a succession of small strokes until he died.[79] Woltman was survived by his fourth wife, Myra Lehamn Woltman, and a sister.[80] Friends were requested to make donations to the Happiness House.

The *World-Telegram & Sun* prepared obituary said:

> A recital of his methods ... could leave the impression that he was a

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[76] Sally Glendinning, "Frederick Woltman, Pulitzer Prize-winning newsman, dies," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*. 6 March 1970. Woltman had moved some of his files from New York to Sarasota. Several large boxes of files were left in the newspaper's morgue.

[77] Glendinning, " 'The Late' Tag Given to Sarasota Writer," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, 2 June 1968. The book was McCarthy by Roy Cohn.

[78] Ibid. The *Times* story says Woltman was a day short of his 65th birthday. However, other sources, including Who's Who in 1946 and the *World-Telegram* prepared obituary, show Woltman's birthday as March 16.

[79] Cook letter, 16 February 1989.

[80] Ibid. The *Times* story refers to Myra Lehamn as Woltman's third wife. However, the *World-Telegram* prepared obituary identifies another woman as Woltman's third wife, so Myra Lehamn would have been his fourth wife.

> dull, statistically minded man who crept about New York in the guise of a modern Sherlock Holmes.
>
> Nothing could be farther from the true picture.
>
> Fred Woltman was a jolly, good-natured man with large streaks of W.C. Fields and Falstaff in him; a gourmet with a special fondness for Chinese cooking, and a circus buff who wrote many a delightful feature on the big top."
>
> Although his exposes were documented as carefully as a Supreme Court decision, he was himself a Bohemian who seldom wandered far from the precincts of Greenwich Village, a man who married a painter, liked a bottle and a cold bird and who could tell stories with the best of them.[81]

Interestingly, the obituary never ran in the *World-Telegram & Sun*. The newspaper folded April 23, 1966, a victim of the New York newspaper wars and labor strikes. The *World-Telegram & Sun*'s circulation had declined steadily since March 1957, when its price was raised from a nickel to a dime. After a 114-day printers' union strike against four New York newspapers in 1963, both circulation and advertising plummeted.

Conclusion

Fred Cook believed Woltman covered the communism stories because of the wishes of his superiors, namely publisher Roy Howard. "Fred had very close ties to the front office as I've indicated; He did the bosses' bidding but he wasn't deluded," he said.[82] Cook remembered one time when the *World-Telegram* was "flaunting another spy scare" with an eight-column headline. Cook asked Woltman whether the story was being blown out of proportion. Woltman, who wrote the story, replied: "Oh, sure, it's exaggerated." Cook then asked Woltman whether the newspaper's emphasis on the threat of communism was overblown. He remembers Woltman lowered his voice so the nearby city desk could not hear and said there once was a time when Communists were leaders in important New York unions. But not now, Woltman said. "Sure, it's blown all out of proportion, but [with a shrug] that's what they want."[83]

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[81] Woltman's prepared obituary, *World-Telegram*, 20 February 1958.

[82] Cook letter, 16 February 1989.

Letter writers to the newspaper often argued that Woltman simply was following instructions from Howard. Yet Woltman once said at least 75 percent of his articles about Communists "come from my own inspiration without suggestion from the *World-Telegram*."[84] It certainly was beneficial for Woltman that his stories agreed with the views of Howard and other Scripps-Howard leaders. Still, it would be very difficult — if not impossible — to imagine that he covered communism only to please the bosses. The hundreds of stories, the boxes of newspaper clippings and letters show otherwise.

One example from Woltman's files reflects that he wasn't as easily influenced by Howard as some believed. Howard sent a letter in November 1955 to managing editor Starnes, saying that a "long time and highly esteemed friend of" Howard and his wife had a tip about a possible Communist group. "Experience has demonstrated that any tip of hers is worthy of consideration," he wrote.[85]

The woman claimed several teaching aids for grade school children had a Communist slant. The items were called "Dial-A-Grams," and one of the series included "The World at Your Fingertips," which described member nations of the United Nations. Howard's source thought the Dial-A-Gram was biased toward Communist countries. Woltman investigated, then sent a memorandum and several Dial-A-Grams to Starnes. "I've gone into all angles of the tip and feel that any story along the lines suggested is not only unjustified but would be unfair," Woltman said.[86] He easily could have written the story simply because the idea came from a friend of Howard's. But Woltman found no reason to write the story, and he didn't.

Woltman also was not representative of other "red-baiters" during this period. He expressed angered at those who applied the "Communist" label to groups and people who were merely liberals. In his column, "What the Reds are up to," Woltman once said: "It always pains this column to see well-meaning Americans with patriotic zeal mess up the continuing struggle against communism."[87]

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[83] Cook, Maverick, 25.

[84] Letter from Woltman to Shipler, 22 July 1946.

[85] The letter from Howard to Starnes was in Woltman's files.

[86] Letter from Woltman to Starnes, November 1955.

The idea of Communists taking control of the United States government during Woltman's era might seem silly 40 years later. But, at the time, the concerns about communism were deeply felt, on both national and local levels. "We took ourselves so seriously then; but the task *was* serious," said Oliver Pilat, one of the founders of the anti-Communist caucus in the New York City guild.[88] "We did what we started out to do; we played a leading role in routing the Communist-influenced leadership of the American Newspaper Guild in 1941, and in the New York local some years later."

Woltman once said he tried to expose Communist activities from the standpoint of preserving the labor union. "When you get Communists in, you don't have a union anymore," he said. "You have a political organization."[89] Woltman said he did not favor suppression of Communists. "That would only make martyrs of them. I aim to show who they are, what they want and how they operate. Then let the public judge."[90]

The unusual political and social climate in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s produced great fears among Americans of national security threats. Foremost of these was a fear of Communists, both home and abroad. Today, reporters who participated in covering this fear, and in many ways helped to promote it, are considered among the worst in journalism history. At the time, though, they also were celebrated by many. And Frederick Enos Woltman of the *New York World-Telegram & Sun* was among the most honored and respected, as well as the most hated and ridiculed, “red-baiters” of the time. Only he won a Pulitzer Prize for this work that today is so villified.

"One has to remember the climate in the country was very different, was very raw back then," Kamm said. "Woltman might have been scorned in another time. I don't think Woltman could get to first base today." Woltman, though perhaps more thorough with his research than any other "red-baiter" at the time, obviously missed the mark on stories. "As I look back, I think he had a tendency to reflect on people by guilt through association," Kamm said.

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[87] Woltman, "Pinning the red label on pacifists means patriotic zeal gone wrong." The column was clipped for inclusion in Woltman's personal files, so no date is stamped on the article.

[88] Pilat, vi.

[89] "How Woltman Won Pulitzer Prize for Unmasking Communists," *World-Telegram*, 6 May 1947, 3.

[90] Ibid.

It is difficult to understand Woltman's career because he does not fit easily into the stereotypes of red-baiting reporters. He was well educated. He was liberal, at least as a young man. He was a Guild president, elected by his New York City fellow reporters. He worked long and hard, he had varied interests, and he was an award-winning reporter on many different stories. He was friends with McCarthy, and he attacked McCarthy. He protected many groups and villified many others.

An analysis of Woltman's career does not celebrate his actions. Today, hardly anyone can understand how McCarthyism and its many components could grip a nation. Or understand how journalists became involved in the issues and "exposed" Communists. Thus, in presentism, it is easier to tag those participants as uneducated, bumbling fools. Woltman's career reflects the complexity of the time and the political, social and intellectual struggles. And, others might add, the role of corporate owners and economics upon the editorial philosophy of newspapers.

Still, in times good and bad, there are certain individuals who lead causes and through whom others can learn about controversial issues and controversial methods. In his own way, for three decades, Woltman was a dominant force, if not the dominant force, in newspaper coverage of communism. "His name is by no means a household word, but he was something then," Kamm said.

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"The Segregationist Press in the Closed Society: The Jackson *Daily News*' Coverage of the Civil Rights Movement, 1960-1964"

by

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"The Segregationist Press in the Closed Society: The Jackson Daily News' Coverage of the Civil Rights Movement, 1960-1964"

For many white Southerners, news of the Civil Rights Movement of the early 1960s was filtered through the prejudiced lenses of a segregationist press. For Mississippi, dominated by the staunchly antiblack Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger, this was especially true. In the crucial period of 1960 to 1964, when Mississippi was at the center of national attention in African-Americans' long struggle for civil rights, the state's dominant segregationist press was at its most vitriolic.

This paper examines the Daily News' coverage of the Civil Rights Movement in the stormy period from 1960 to 1964. This five-year period saw the first stirrings of the student sit-in movement, the freedom rides, the Ole Miss Crisis, the assassination of Medgar Evers, the events of Mississippi Freedom Summer, and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Through it all, the Daily News staunchly defended segregation and villified all proponents of social change and progress in Mississippi. Such vehement opposition of the segregationist press is an important and critical story in the larger tableaux of the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Newspapers such as the Daily News both represented the depth of white opposition to social change and reinforced it. Accordingly, the segregationist press is worthy of close study.

Mississippi's entrenched segregation was described by the historian James Silver as a "closed society," in which the tenets of white supremacy dominated the state and relegated blacks to second-class citizenship. Blacks were strictly segregated from whites and were not allowed the vote or other rights. Whites who did not go along with this orthodoxy were pressured to conform by the white Citizens' Councils, an outgrowth of the Southern white backlash against the school desegregation mandate of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Founded in Mississippi, the organization spread across the South to fight integration.[1]

The Mississippi press, for its part, vigilantly guarded "the racial, economic, political, and religious orthodoxy of the closed society," according to Silver. Both Jackson newspapers, the state's largest, the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Daily News*, were owned by the Hederman family, and Silver maintained that they dominated Mississippi thought. The Hedermans owned the *Hattiesburg American* newspaper as well as a Jackson television station. Their tight control of the Jackson media market had prompted area businessmen to band together to form a rival newspaper, the Jackson *State-Times*, but the newspaper died in 1962 for want of financial support. The *Columbia Journalism Review*, in a 1967 article reviewing Southern newspapers' coverage of civil rights issues, called Mississippi newspapers the weakest in the nation. The *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Daily News* were singled out as "quite possibly the worst metropolitan papers in the United States."[2] Both papers supported the Citizens' Councils editorially.[3]

The Jackson *Daily News*, Jackson's afternoon paper, typified the quality of the Hederman papers and the coverage most of the Mississippi press afforded to civil rights and race issues. Its editor in the early 1960s was Jimmy Ward, a firebrand who held forth in a front-page column, "Covering the Crossroads." Ward's column featured his comments on items in the news, and he often referred to civil rights events.

When the freedom riders integrating interstate bus transportation crossed into Alabama in May 1961, Ward called the riders a "band of crackpots." The same day, he commented on the growing number of blacks in Washington: "Word from Washington is that city is getting so black the lightning bugs are coming out in the daytime."[4]

When the riders arrived in Jackson May 24, 1961, Ward called the riders "human freaks." The next day, the editor derided the riders as "idictic agitating nitwits" and "abnormal mammals" who, in their effort to desegregate bus station restrooms and cafeterias, had come to Jackson for the "dubious honor of standing hip-to-hip before a bus station urinal with each other." He invited the students to return to the North to solve their own region's race problems, such as the high number of rapes in that "model city for race mixing," Washington, D.C., and the high juvenile delinquency rate in New York City.[5]

In news articles, anyone who favored integration, or "race-mixing," was dubbed a "mixer" in the newspaper's headlines. But despite the headlines, wire articles written by Associated Press and United Press International correspondents covering freedom rides outside Mississippi were generally balanced as printed in the *Daily News*, containing even the "mixers'" versions of events. When the freedom riders were savagely attacked in Montgomery, Alabama, the Daily News wire article was headlined, "Mixers Attacked in Montgomery," and a smaller headline noted that a white mob had beaten the integrationists.[6] Similarly, a wire service retrospective on the Brown decision bore the headline, "Seven Years Under Black Monday Rule," but the article below it was balanced, containing views of integrationists as well as segregationists.[7]

But staff-written articles about the rides were more one-sided, speculative, and opinionated. A locally written article about the freedom riders in Alabama quoted no one by name, but said "Montgomery hotel-lobby experts" were blaming out-of-state demonstrators for the trouble. The "average man on the street" was said to be surprised at the recent turn of events, which included a mob attacking the riders in Birmingham and setting fire to their bus in Anniston. "[W]hen Anniston and Birmingham reacted so positively last Sunday, it should have been sufficient to let anybody know that aggressive violations of Alabama law would evoke reactions if continued, local residents insist," the Daily News reported.[8]

As the riders neared Mississippi, the Daily News' coverage tended to focus on state leaders' preparations for the riders. The views of civil rights workers were not sought, but the opinions of Citizens' Council leaders were. Citizens' Council administrator William J. Simmons characterized the bus-riding students as "invading integrationists" and asked rhetorically whether the federal government, which had finally escorted the freedom riders through Alabama, would show the same solicitude for a Council expedition to the "heart of Harlem" to break Northern laws and customs. Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett offered moral support to Alabama Governor John Patterson over the latter's experience with the riders and prepared for their arrival in Mississippi.[9]

Editor Ward approvingly noted the state's preparations. While he warned locals to let the police deal with the integrationists, he paradoxically continued to attack the riders in inflammatory language. And while Ward said calm people regretted the "unfortunate mob action" in Alabama, "On the other hand there is no weeping in the street down here because one of the invading screwballs got his hair parted."[10]

Arriving in Jackson, the freedom riders were quickly arrested without incident. "Mixers Reach Jackson With No Violence," the Daily News announced, and an accompanying front-page editorial lauded Barnett for his law-and-order stand. The editorial questioned whether the freedom riders properly belonged in the local jail, the mental hospital, or the zoo. "These people," Ward repeated, "are crackpots."[11]

As arrests mounted the following day, still with no violence, Ward congratulated the community in a front-page, signed editorial for maintaining Southern hospitality during adversity. The "mixers," Ward said, had made Mississippi look good. "We wish for these vulgar, restroom-loving quacks a pleasant journey home. Thanks to them for favors done in their illegal, scummy mission."[12]

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As the arrests continued, the Daily News continued to poke fun at the riders by one turn, then excoriate them at another. On the same day Ward derided the "silly cranky visitors" as welfare cheaters and an editorial accused them of failing to bathe, the editor attacked the riders for uttering unspecified lies about Mississippi. "Social gangsters in our midst have spent years slandering and libeling all of us. It will take a long time to erase their filthy-minded lies."[13]

As the riders filled the local jail through the last week of May, 1961, the Daily News carried articles about the first rumblings of another Mississippi civil rights milestone, the application of James Meredith to enter the all-white University of Mississippi. Meredith, after months of wrangling with Ole Miss officials, sued for admission to the university on May 31, 1961.[14]

By September 1962, response to Meredith's application for admission was reaching a fever pitch after more than a year of legal maneuvering, appeals, and hearings. Justice Hugo Black had ordered Meredith's admission, and Governor Barnett had announced a statewide television speech to address the crisis. The front page of the Daily News announced that a cross had been burned outside the veterans' apartments where Meredith might soon be living. The accompanying picture of the blazing cross, the first of several to be burned at Oxford in coming weeks, carried the caption, "Greeting for Negro."[15]

The Daily News' coverage of the Meredith crisis lacked the humorous edge of its coverage of the freedom rides. Meredith posed much more of a threat than the bus-riding students, who had challenged a form of segregation that did not touch most Mississippians' daily lives--interstate bus transportation--and who could be removed from public view swiftly with effective police work. Meredith's attack on segregation at the university, on the other hand, represented a more direct, substantive threat to Mississippi's way of life, and its preservation was threatened by the federal government's persistence on his behalf. The higher stakes stiffened the Daily News' resistance.

The newspaper outlined the stakes in a front-page editorial after the cross-burning. Headlined "Blueprint for Destruction," the editorial noted that violence was increasing in New York City, a clear result of the "race mixing" so prominent there. Mississippians faced a choice between following New York's example of desegregation, which "leads straight to decay and corruption," or refusing to follow the path to oblivion. The editorial did not mention the Meredith crisis, but said it was important for Mississippians to consider such crucial choices "at this point in Mississippi history."[16]

The editorial foreshadowed the governor's themes that night in his television address. Saying no Caucasian race had yet survived social integration, he declared, "We will not drink from the cup of genocide." He repeated his pledge that no school would be integrated in Mississippi while he was governor.[17]

The next morning's Daily News provided blanket coverage of the governor's address as well as warm support for him. "Mississippi Mix? Ross Says 'Never'!", headlined the primary article, accompanied by the full text of the governor's remarks and an editorial, titled "We Support Gov. Barnett." The editorial said the governor's position is "one that is solidly endorsed by all right-thinking Mississippians." To underscore the point, a photograph showed a harried secretary sorting through the piles of supportive telegrams Barnett had received.[18]

In the days after the speech, the Daily News began to circle the wagons against expected criticism of Barnett's stand. "Let the Crackpots Scream," a Daily News editorial advised, saying the state would never please the "wild-eyed social bandits who have used this venom to turn many of the nation's cities into sidewalks of jungle terror." An accompanying, unsigned column on the editorial page defended the doctrine of interposition, which Barnett had used to justify ignoring federal orders.[19]

News articles the following Sunday in the Daily News, Clarion-Ledger combined Sunday edition also served to back up the governor. A front-page article labeled "bulletin" reported rumors that Ku Klux Klansmen were gathering in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in preparation to descend upon Oxford or Jackson. Another front-page article, lacking any named sources, exhorted state officials to "stand firm" with Barnett or face retribution by the legislature. Even the newspapers' society columnist got into the act; Florence Sillers Ogden "Dis An' Dat" lavished praise on Barnett.[20]

In the week that followed, the Daily News excoriated out-of-state media for criticizing Barnett, praised Southern newspapers who supported him, urged citizens to be careful in dealing with reporters visiting the state, lauded Barnett in a lengthy profile, and continued to warn that desegregation would ruin Mississippi as it ruined the North. Showing a rare crack in his humorless stance toward the Meredith issue, Ward suggested the government should sidestep the entire issue and declare every person in the state a Negro, "and the Magnolia State will become the happiest, biggest Harlem the world has ever known."[21]

The Jackson papers' close relationship with Barnett was apparent from their favorable coverage of the governor and their news articles echoing the governor's themes. Moreover, the death notice of longtime Clarion-Ledger city editor Gene Wirth in the midst of the Ole Miss crisis called Wirth a "confidant and close adviser" of the governor who "during the past days of crisis had spent many long and late hours conferring with the chief executive and other state officials." Barnett was an honorary pallbearer at Wirth's funeral.[22]

The week prior to Meredith's admission, the Daily News followed closely the impending "invasion" of federal forces. The newspaper's articles and editorials argued paradoxically that federal troops or marshals were not needed in peaceful Mississippi but that Mississippians stood prepared to fight to the death to fight integration. The newspaper's resolve against violence had faded. As the Daily News reported Lieutenant Governor Paul B. Johnson's turning away Meredith on the Ole Miss campus, a front-page article warned that Mississippians would win the integration battle "regardless of the cost in human life." An accompanying article, datelined Birmingham, Alabama, noted that thousands of members of the States Rights Party were willing to take up arms in Barnett's behalf. Mississippi's U.S. senators said in an article on the same page that the use of troops in Mississippi would be illegal.[23]

The next day, Ward's front-page column said the public should be congratulated for remaining calm, as no incident had been reported. "There is no cause whatsoever for Federal troops to sent [sic] into Mississippi. With everyone acting peacefully, why would troops be sent unless it would be a military grab of power?" On the same page, an article described a gathering of 500 police officers in Oxford, "watchfully alert against a possible invasion of 50 to 100 U.S. marshals especially trained as riot-busters."[24]

Two days before Meredith's arrival at Ole Miss on Sunday, September 30, 1962, the Daily News provided its readers a musical anthem of the state's determination. Words and music to the "The Never, No Never Song" ran in place of the usual cartoon on the editorial page. An editorial said the song expertly put the state's attitude to music and suggested that readers clip it for a possible mass rendition at the Ole Miss-University of Kentucky football game the following day. The song, an ode to segregation, declared that, at Ole Miss, "Never, never, never, shall our emblem go from Colonel Reb to Ole Black Joe."[25]

The day after the riot, the Daily News, in its news coverage and its opinion columns, placed the blame for the violence squarely on the shoulders of the federal government and the marshals. The headlines expressed the newspaper's position completely: "Negro Troops Set Off Oxford Battle," "Marshals Fire

Gas Without Warning," "Ross Blames 'Trigger-Happy' U.S. Officers." The newspaper's account was consistent with the support for Barnett and vilification of federal authorities that marked the coverage leading up to the violence.[26]

Oddly, the story of Harry Murphy, a light-skinned black from New York who claimed to have "passed" at Ole Miss during his days as a Navy student at Ole Miss in the mid-1940s, received little notice in the Daily News. Murphy's attendance at Ole Miss beat Meredith by almost 20 years to the honor of desegregating the school, but the newspaper buried Murphy's short account on page 8 and left the writing to the wire services.[27]

If the Daily News' coverage of civil rights news was blatantly segregationist, its coverage of blacks in other arenas showed a similar segregationist bent that was, at least, more subtle. Mostly, the Daily News just ignored the black community. Blacks were seldom seen or heard in the news columns, unless they committed a crime.

The Daily News, which consistently ran page-one articles about honors given local white schoolchildren at area junior and senior high schools, did not honor black schoolchildren with similar coverage in these spreads.[28] Society pages pictured pages upon pages of white brides, but no blacks.[29]

Sometimes blacks made it into the newspaper, perhaps if they died violently or if public money was being appropriated for black schools.[30] It helped, too, if a black had some connection with the newspaper. The manager of the Clarion-Ledger Colored Circulation Department, a 24-year-veteran of the newspaper, was honored with a three-paragraph article, albeit in the classified section, on the occasion of his departure to California for another job.[31]

But participation in any violent act was a surer way for a black to win entry into the Daily News pages. Blacks who were accused of committing violent crimes, not matter how far away from Mississippi, could wind up on the front page. The newspaper, for example, gave page-one play to two New Jersey youths accused of killing a local socialite and to the murder of a New York subway passenger by a black man.[32]

In 1963, the assassination of Medgar Evers, NAACP field secretary, gave the Daily News a rare chance for the newspaper to show empathy, even in a restrained way, to a black man. In the first story describing the shooting of Evers outside his home the night of June 11, Ward's column called the killing a "dastardly act of inhuman behavior," virtually identical language to that used by Barnett in describing the murder. But the newspaper described the killing more in terms of its damage to Jackson's reputation for peaceful race relations than as a human tragedy. An editorial blamed the bloodshed on professional agitators, usually a code word for civil rights workers, and lamented the damage to Jackson's image. An accompanying cartoon depicted a book representing "Jackson's Record of Racial Harmony" as blemished by Evers' assassination.[33]

Oddly, the Clarion-Ledger emphasized the out-of-state ties of murder suspect Byron de la Beckwith when he was arrested. "Californian is Charged With Murder of Evers," read the newspaper's front-page headline, although Beckwith, who was born in California, had lived in Mississippi since he was a child.[34]

The year 1964 had a wealth of civil rights news for the Daily News to cover, all of it controversial. The new civil rights bill was wending its way through Congress, much to Southerners' chagrin. Another black student, Cleveland Donald, Jr., was applying to the University of Mississippi. Most controversially, hundreds of Northern college students were in Mississippi under a program organized by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. The students, many from the North, planned to register black voters and to teach blacks about their public responsibilities in "freedom schools."[35]

The Daily News would sometimes editorialize against a combination of the three. The civil rights bill was considered repressive and an unnecessary substitute for black initiative. One editorial said that blacks were not the victims of discrimination in Jackson and needed not laws but a greater desire for self-improvement. The editorial noted in closing that blacks and whites would do well in ignore the "agitating human locusts" who might invade the state.[36]

The Daily News often characterized the incoming students as invaders. At first, the newspaper closely followed the story when civil rights workers Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Cheney were reported missing. But coverage quickly slacked off until bodies of the three were found almost two months later on August 4. Then and afterward, the newspaper closely followed the search for their killers but was strangely silent on its

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editorial page about the murders. The newspaper found space to comment on the wonders of the nuclear age, sleeping habits, dairy herds, and Alaskan resources, but said nothing about what was one of the largest national news stories of the year.[37]

Overall, the Daily News coverage of the civil rights movement mirrored the orthodoxy of the closed society. Blacks, so rejected by society, were rejected and maligned by the newspaper. Civil rights workers, so threatening to Mississippi, were scorned. The newspaper echoed the Citizens' Council and the politicians, excoriating outsiders and agitators. The exact effect of this coverage is unknown; however, the Daily News and its ilk certainly sustained the closed society and, by extension, the violence that enforced it. The Daily News did not openly invite disorder, although it came close to it in the Ole Miss crisis. But its news coverage and enthusiastic support of political leadership that compared integration to genocide constituted a more implicit invitation. By reflecting the closed society with such vehemence, the Daily News contributed to its maintenance in long-suffering, racially backward Mississippi in the early 1960s.

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26. *Daily News*, October 1, 1962; October 2, 1962.

27. *Daily News*, September 25, 1962.

28. *Daily News*, May 19, 1961; May 26, 1961; June 5, 1964.

29. *Daily News*, *Clarion-Ledger* combined Sunday edition, September 2, 1962. This edition is typical of a society section of the *Daily News* during this period.

30. *Daily News*, May 28, 1962.

31. *Daily News*, September 2, 1962.

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A "Political Institutional" Theory of the News: The Emergence of Independent Journalism in Detroit, 1865-1920

Richard L. Kaplan

What are the politics of the press? How can we explain the particular news choices and reporting practices of journalism? This essay argues that to comprehend the media's selection of news events and its interpretive biases, one must examine the role of the news in the "public-political sphere" (Juergen Habermas).[1] In constructing its daily quota of news narratives, the press aspires to present a formal, authoritative account of the day's most important events. The media transform private events into public affairs and suggests these reports are worthy of the nation's attention. In turn, the news, as Michael Schudson writes, becomes a crucial "symbolic resource and cultural focal point" for society.[2] As such, journalism is inextricably implicated in the conflictual field of public-political debate with all its disagreements over what is and what should be the proper ordering of American society. There is no safe ground from which the press can survey the whole of the social battlefield without its observations and interpretations being also dragged into the fray. Unlike other professions, journalists are distinctively lacking in the attributes which might shield them from external criticism: specialized technical knowledge, formal scientific training, esoteric occupational languages, or the creation of a self-evidently, socially useful product. The news as a relatively "uninsulated profession" must continually assert its descriptions and analyses as valid against a host of alternative views and authorities.[3] In going about its daily business, rushing to get this scoop, hurrying to meet that deadline, the media often comes under the critical scrutiny of contending political actors. These political groups may differ with the press over the accuracy of the news. They may deny the validity of the media's descriptions, denounce their analyses, and impugn their motives. Or, at least, the politician, the public relations agent, and the citizen's advocate may realize that news reports with other spins would serve their purposes better. They know that more favorable press coverage can be obtained by assertions of injury and unfairness, in sum, by heaving a few criticisms in the direction of the press. Consequently, the interpretations of journalists necessarily come into conflict with other public-political organizations. These other organizations possess varying resources and legitimacy to present their own interpretations of American life as authoritative. Depending upon this distribution of power and the available cultural rationales in the public sphere, the press possesses greater or lesser autonomy to determine which events and perspectives qualify as the news. Thus, this essay argues that politics fundamentally determines the news.[4]

This essay examines the case of the daily press in Detroit between 1865-1920.[5] The reporting practices during this period and their transformations are used to demonstrate the explanatory power of this "political-institutional" theory of the press. In the early twentieth century, the American press fundamentally changed how it reported the everyday occurrences, rituals and dramas of American life. Newspapers dispensed with the celebratory political partisanship typical of the Gilded Age and adopted a more sober style of impartial, expert reporting.[6] Denouncing its former political advocacy on behalf of the Republicans or Democrats, the press declared that henceforth it would provide an authoritative, factual account of the day's most important events. At this time, and subsequent to the "realigning elections" of 1894-1896, American political institutions underwent fundamental changes with the two political parties suffering a significant decline in their organizational and symbolic resources. This essay argues that the shifts in journalistic content and narrative style between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are interlinked with these broader transformations in the American polity.

Theories of the Press and Politics

There are two dominant sociological theories of the production of the news: the production of culture account and the ethnomethodological analysis.[7] Despite adding crucial insights to our understanding of the social production of the news, both theories inadequately thematize the political dimension of journalism. Each neglects the place of the press in the broader field of the public sphere.

Since the 1970s, numerous studies have demonstrated that the media report not "all the news fit to print" but a highly selective version thereof. The "production of culture" perspective accounts for the choices and biases of the press by analyzing the organizational contexts and market environment of news production. Journalism, confronting the constraints of limited time, scarce resources, and an uncertain flow of usable news events, develops a set of routine procedures in order to efficiently produce a daily quantity of news commodities. Sociologists have documented standardized methods for the effective coordination, collection, and processing of raw news occurrences. These organizational procedures include: "news beats"; formulaic journalistic themes and genres for classifying news events; and intrabureaucratic negotiations between news divisions over the placement and prominence of news stories. Out of this matrix of pragmatic adaptation to constraints and efficient utilization of resources, news organizations have fashioned, in Gaye Tuchman's phrase, an elaborate "news net" to catch all relevant news events. Unfortunately, this news net also allows some of the day's words and deeds to escape through its holes. Such a theoretical perspective ably documents the many biases and exclusions, and in particular the privileging of official sources, that is typically produced by journalistic routines. As Schudson remarks, "the emphasis here is not on intentional bias but on the consequences, intended or not, of social forms and processes."[8]

However, this production of culture analysis takes for granted a number of aspects of the news -- aspects that are poorly explained by the functional exigencies of producing a news commodity. The particular selection of facts, events, and authoritative news sources cannot be accounted for merely by the pragmatic procedures of efficient news production. Case studies show that reporters are predisposed to interview and cite "legitimate" and "important" news sources, when alternative voices are just as accessible.[9] Furthermore, as ethnomethodological writers have repeatedly argued, facts and news events are not just given. They do not exist prior to, and independent of, the reporter's perceptions. The choice of facts and the delimitation of events out of the flow and confusion of experience require an implicit cultural-theoretical framework guiding the reporter's selections. The functional account of organizational selections, outlined by such authors as Tuchman, Leon Sigal, and Mark Fishman, needs to be supplemented by cultural considerations.[10]

In general, we can say that the production of culture approach adopts the perspective of the culture-producing organization.[11] It takes for granted the differentiation of the organization from its environment and the specialized, technical nature of its "task" in producing a news commodity. But, as the new institutionalism in organizational theory tells us, if one adopts such an organizational point of view, the broader cultural assumptions structuring the institutional environment--in this case the public sphere--are screened from view. Shared cultural assumptions that define the public arena, such as who is an important public speaker and what counts as valid public speech, are taken for granted.

The ethnomethodological analysis remedies some of the cultural deficits of production of culture theorists. It explains how journalists and, also, sociologists can be oblivious to the necessary interpretive work that accompanies the construction of the news. Journalists, like the average individual, mistake their perceptions of the world for an already given, natural one. They overlook the way an interpretive frame is indeed needed to select which features and facets of the world are most worthy of consideration. These choices typically rely on a flexible, pre-theoretical, commonsense understanding of the way the world functions. This commonsense is constructed though interactive negotiations among newsworkers, their journalistic colleagues, and those higher up in the corporation news organization. Undergirding all the sets of bureaucratic routines and organizational strategies of news collection outlined by the production of culture approach are perpetually renegotiated understandings of how the world works and what is newsworthy.[12]

Ethnomethodology's depiction of the news as an interactively constructed, common-sense picture of the world can open up to a broader notion of the news as the cultural struggle of social classes or "hegemony." In this case, Walter Cronkite's classical closing remarks to the evening broadcast of the CBS news -- "And that's the way it is, March 9th..." -- reflect, not so much the state of the world, as a particular ideological picture that a class coalition is seeking to impose on the American public. Such theorists of hegemony expand the notion of the interactive construction of the news beyond the confines of the news room and at the same time politicize it.[13] However, in attributing a political dimension to the news, hegemony theorists neglect the way in which the specific institutional organization of the public-political sphere affects the media's agenda. "Class power" in constructing hegemony is mediated by specifically political organizations in the public sphere. Before they can speak, classes need to assume an organizational form (and gain a spokesperson). But, the public sphere with its available forms of organization and types of cultural rationales (along with the more general "rule system" of the polity) tend to limit who can add their voices to the deliberations of public opinion.[14] The strength of those political actors, their resources and their legitimacy, determines which perspectives and issues are reported by the media.

This essay now turns to a comparative analysis of the news in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries in order to show ~~reveal~~ how changes in the role of the press in ~~the~~ public-political life affect the reporting practices and the narratives of journalism.

The Ideals and Practices of Nineteenth-Century Partisan Journalism

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, political parties dominated American public-political life. Historians have defined the nineteenth-century American government as a state of "parties and courts." These two political agencies gave shape and coordination to federal policy-making and implementation.[15] Several resources enhanced the power of parties to dictate the terms of American public-political debate. In addition to its control over access to elected office and its conversion of governmental administrative positions into so many patronage jobs for loyal party workers, the party commanded the overwhelming loyalty of the voting population. Because of their control over political resources and their legitimacy as the public representative of the electorate, parties became the dominant if not exclusive voices on issues of national importance.

In this context of the overweening power of parties, newspapers publicly pledged their allegiance to either the Democrats or its nineteenth-century opponent, be it Whig or Republican. The nineteenth-century press was openly and formally partisan. Partisanship was a normative role, and the Detroit press, in professing allegiance to a party, assumed specific obligations and in turn gained special privileges. The relationship between subscribers and journal was not just an anonymous exchange of money and product in the market but, rather, a mutual vowing of commitments and duties as members of a political community. The ties binding reader and paper were ones of solidarity and identification.

Detroit newspapers at times gave voice to their diverse duties as partisan journals. For instance, in its 1868 election season "prospectus" to potential subscribers, the *Detroit Post* pledged to advocate the views of the Republican party, "to advance their cause," and to give the political community of Republicans a specifically public forum. And, as one editorial argued, the ideal newspaper should be "a faithful organ" and "represent the [group's] sentiments during the campaign." During the election season, the Democrat or Republican party member could turn to his/her journal for guidance in all political debates and in the proper partisan interpretation of unfolding news stories. Thus, the leading Democratic organ in Michigan assured its readers:

> The Free Press alone in this State is able to combine a Democratic point of view of our state politics and local issues with those of national importance...[It] will combine political news with a cool and dispassionate discussion of principles and men in such a manner as will afford to the people means of the best judgments as to the truth.[16]

In return for the newspapers' service to the party, the reader-party member was obliged to support his/her party organ. Quoting the *Post*'s 1868 prospectus, "[The *Post*] depends upon those who are Republicans...to aid in extending its circulation." Similarly, the Democratic *Detroit Free Press* declared in its campaign prospectus of May 1868:

> We urge the people of Michigan to continue to act and judge for themselves. Subscribe for your county papers. Sustain and maintain them first. They look out for your local interests, and they give a warm support to our national principles.[17]

At times a newspaper might betray the trust of the political community. In the Summer of 1872, the Republican *Post* contended that the Democratic *Free Press* had violated the ethics proper to a political organ. The *Free Press* had tricked its subscribers when it abruptly shifted from opposing to supporting the candidacy of Horace Greeley as presidential nominee of the Democratic Party.

> The Free Press' advocacy [of a reform Anti-Greeley position] was designed to be a pledge and an inducement to all anti-Greeley Democrats to subscribe for that paper and rely upon it as a faithful organ to represent their sentiments during the campaign. Many of them did subscribe...in full faith that it would continue to be their organ and advocate their faith and policy.
>
> But the Free Press has hoisted the [pro-Greeley] ticket and deceived and betrayed all those who trusted in its pledge...[18]

The nineteenth-century partisan newspaper, thus, functioned as an expressive organ of a pre-existing political community. Journalism, as responsive to a partisan community, can be considered from three different analytical perspectives; News can be seen as a ritual of group solidarity, as democratic communication among party members, or as a strategic tool in the party's pursuit of electoral power.

The historian Michael McGerr has forcefully analyzed the late nineteenth-century press according to the model of partisanship journalism as an expressive ritual.[19] Such publicly enacted rites are typically seen as having the role of expressing a community's core values and, also, instituting group identities--rendering concrete and salient society's classificatory schemes. McGerr argues that Gilded Age newspapers, along with election campaigns rallies, continually and publicly displayed their political allegiance to the party. These emotional performances of commitment helped to reinforce the individual

As one would expect, newspaper partisanship was especially trumpeted on page two, the editorial page. After all, editorials are the genre in which journals most directly profess their political views. And, indeed, as loyal organs committed to the success of the party, the vast majority of the Detroit's dailies pleaded their party's cause during election season. Even in non-election season the newspapers in the late nineteenth century explicitly aligned themselves with the positions and policies of their parties in one fifth to one half of the opinion pieces. (See chart p. 13.) Newspapers spoke not as external, impartial commentators on the parties' policies, but as representatives of the partisan community. Editorials, in part, became an extended dialogue, or more accurately a diatribe, between local papers standing in for the two parties. In this two-sided debate, the newspapers implicitly suggested that the viewpoints of the two parties exhausted the relevant spectrum of political viewpoints.

Partisanship also entered into the news. No sharp dividing line preserved the impartiality of the news from the advocacy of the editorial page. But an examination of the partisan advocacy in the news demonstrates how partisan rituals were not just a consensual expression of the political community's values, but also served the parties' strategic interests. Michael McGerr and Richard Jensen have both emphasized the democratic consequences of the diverse rites of newspaper partisanship. They suggest that the public rituals of newspapers and campaigns reinforce popular allegiance to the Democrats and Republicans. Political identities so enacted effectively guided and motivated last century's voters to high electoral participation year after year.[27] But McGerr and Jensen ignore how parties' emphasis on traditional voter ties of loyalty and symbolic identification occurred at the expense of substantive debate and the expression of multiple points of view. Such an invocation of traditional partisan allegiances tended to privilege those interests and issues already articulated by the party.

Detroit's four partisan papers openly paraded their strategic concerns. They felt no embarrassment over their desire to win at all costs. Republican and Democrat journals alike believed it was necessary that their party gain power, implement their policies, and of course distribute patronage to loyal party supporters. The Republican organ declared, "With these convictions..[etc.] the POST proposes to utter no uncertain sound during the canvass just now opening..." And, the Democrat journal vowed "[U]ncompromising advocacy of the right" and to "aid the cause to the extent of its ability..."[28] In party member's own identification with the fortunes of the party. Journalism's public display of political advocacy was part of a broader political culture which suggested that partisan identity was a central and proper aspect of social identity and should be proudly proclaimed. Furthermore, the repeated invocation of the Democrats and Republicans and their battles in the narratives of the press and in election campaigns transformed parties into living, breathing entities for the population.[20]

In the nineteenth century, newspapers did indeed exuberantly and publicly display their political commitments. For example, when a new management took over the *Detroit Post* in 1884, it reassured their readers that the paper would not stray from its Republican advocacy. The *Post* asserted, "Lukewarm or non-committal it will never be" in supporting the Grand Old Party.[21]

This predominance of parties in American political life and the avowed loyalty of newspapers was manifested in numerous journalistic genres and narrative devices of nineteenth-century newspaper. All the Detroit papers, for example, published a list of endorsements in election season.[22] Of course, the journal did not pick and choose among the party's nominees according to their qualifications and policy positions, but rather endorsed the entire party slate. The endorsements were printed continuously from the day of nomination until the polls closed--often for a period of four months. Unlike today's publication of endorsements for a day or two prior to the election, this continuous partisan proclamation suggests that the goal of nineteenth-century papers was not simply to inform and advise the voter-reader. Rather, the endorsements, like a badge of honor or a bumper sticker permanently adhered to the masthead, proclaimed the paper's allegiances. Other emblems of allegiance included:

-Notices of party meetings and calls for rallies turning the paper into something like a party bulletin board;[23]
-Grossly unequal amounts of news coverage devoted to the activities and speeches of the two parties' notables;
-Striving to publish all important party pronouncements and documents;[24]
-Headlines and narrative remarks within news stories that explicitly judge the two parties;
-Quips and jibes mocking the other party's policies and personnel, a regular feature of the editorial page.[25]
-Diverse articles predicting imminent electoral success.
-Accounts of election rallies exaggerating the numbers in attendance, the enormity of the spectacle, the quality of the speeches, and the enthusiasm of the audience;
-Front-page editorial cartoons praising one party or denouncing the other.[26]

this journalistic advocacy, the strategic requirements for a party's victory quickly assumed priority over the normative ideal of the public sphere as free, open, and critical discussion.

Two aspects of the news reflected these strategic concerns: the blatantly exaggerated reports of the party's rallies and election prospects, and secondly the very selection of events and topics considered newsworthy by the paper. News stories devoted to magnifying the spectacle of party rallies were present in all the election-season partisan papers until the early twentieth century. Most of this evaluative coverage was devoted to reporting the magnificent marches, stirring speeches, and blazing bonfires of the allied party. The opposed party's rallies were noted only to deride the speeches, to remark on the miserly turnout, and to jeer the lack of popular enthusiasm. Generally, at a minimum, a half a column of print a day in election seasons was devoted to the reporting of (from two to thirteen) rallies around the state of Michigan. If the party gathering occurred in Detroit, the space devoted to these rallies expanded exponentially to one to three pages of minutely printed text.[29]

The efforts of parties and papers to rally their troops through exaggerated accounts constituted a standard, even formulaic, news genre. Witness this circular from Ohio Democratic party headquarters which the Republicans published in order to embarrass and taunt the Democrats:

> Editor Democrat, Bowling Green, O.:
>
> Dear Sir - National success is assured. There is no event in the future more probable than the election of Tilden and Hendricks. The feeling in the state is intensifying, and if our friends will do their duty we will wheel Ohio into line. We are claiming the state for November. In your paper, from this to the seventh [of November], claim the national contest and this state also. BE EARNEST IN THIS MATTER. DO IT EXULTINGLY AND WITH THE UTMOST CONFIDENCE. Do not be lukewarm in this, but fervent. The Republicans are greatly alarmed. They feel that the fight is gone. They are drooping. Keep them there. Press the advantage which the situation assures. There is much to be gained from this course. Demand the polling of every vote, that our victory may be overwhelming and last through the years. Claim the state with confidence...Hold meetings, everywhere in your county. Exult at your meetings and press each one to go forward with assurance of victory.
>
> Very truly yours,
>
> John G. Thompson, Chairman[30]

Richard Jensen has explained the strategic logic governing the party's mobilizing efforts in election campaigns, an explanation that can be extended to the partisan paper's manifestly inaccurate accounts of election rallies. Given relatively strong bonds of voter loyalty, the task for parties and their allied papers in an era of tight electoral competition became mobilizing voters and getting them en masse to the polls.[31] Political actors generated publicity for a number of reasons, but convincing voters through substantive debate was not one. The goal was to energize already convinced party members, not to persuade an independent electorate. The public spectacles of partisanship and party power which were staged in election rallies and then magnified in newspaper accounts were, for Jensen, aimed at mobilizing the party faithful and intimidating opponents. Election campaigns were a series of morale-raising events that built to a crescendo.

The interests of party mangers and publishers in electoral success affected news coverage in a second, more profound manner. The issues and events considered newsworthy were defined by the party's political agenda. More specifically, the news media repetitively publicized the policies and positions that marked off the favored party from its foe. By consistently reporting the issue stands separating the two parties, the partisan press worked to strengthen the electoral coalition underlying the party and to splinter the opposed alliance. As the issues dividing Democrats and Republicans shifted over the course of the late nineteenth century--from contentions over Southern Reconstruction, to accusations of corruption and graft in governmental administration, to debates over import tariffs and inflationary monetary policies at century's end--so evolved the news agenda.[32] Furthermore, this politically biased news did not rest content with quoting the words and noting the deeds of the elected representatives. Instead, Detroit journals traced the consequences of parties' policies deep into civil society. Democratic and Republican dailies duly reported all social events that could be taken to illustrate the beneficial or deleterious effects of the government's legislative proposals.[33] In sum, party interests determined the partisan news agenda.

Unlike our contemporary papers, nineteenth-century newspapers stood under the protecting umbrella of a party's political legitimacy as a representative of the public. Furthermore, newspapers possessed a Democratic or Republican readership which expected a strong display of partisanship by their journal. Protected from criticism by these resources, the partisan paper was free to explore systematically and repeatedly the social implications of governmental policies in editorials and in the news. The journalistic agenda was not dependent upon the occurrence of "news events" to justify the reporter's story selection. What would be forbidden to our contemporary independent and "objective" press as editorializing -- as exposing the reporter's subjective point of view -- could be thoroughly pursued by the nineteenth-century press.

In this manner Detroit's daily journals presented strongly opposed images of the nature of American society and emphatically denounced the consequences of the other party's rule. Such partisan newspapers had the merit of providing a coherent interpretive frame for understanding everyday news events. The effect of their politicized reporting was to dramatize the political issues at stake by publicizing sharply opposed policy positions. The *Post* acknowledged this political role in explaining the mission of partisan journals:

> The secret of this influence [of papers on the community] is not so much that they furnish people with opinions ready made; but that they keep prominent and engrossing topics constantly before them, and throw all possible life upon these topics from every quarter....[Republican papers] are constantly stimulating this reflection and discussion [by the public.][34]

On the other hand, this emphatic public debate was contaminated by parties' calculating pursuit of political power. Issues, news and views that fractured or threatened the party's social coalition, such as temperance, abolition, and the problems of farmers, were suppressed and excluded from the daily news.[35] The press in its alignment with formal political society with its concern for the strategic pursuit of power did not report the broader range of views, voices and issues in civil society.[36] The public sphere, at least as represented by the press as the central medium of public communication, became absorbed in the extensively politicized and polarized debates between the two parties. The press's strategic reporting forced a departure from the ideals of republican politics and the public sphere: open, rational deliberation among citizens over issues of the common good.[37]

Twentieth-century American papers surely adopt the opposite political posture. In order to avoid all appearance of partisanship and politics, they never articulate an explicit, divergent political position. They instead submerge their selections and evaluations in the implicit, unthematized norms and theories of society's dominant culture. Between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, journalism migrated from the sphere of open political contention to that of social integration.[38]

A General Measure of Changes in Newspaper Partisanship

The partisanship of the America press declined radically after the year 1896. The following chart presents a measure of this changing partisanship over the period 1867-1920. It gauges two different aspects of “political bias” or journalistic political preference in news and editorials. These two dimensions can be called “manifest” and “latent,” or “overt” and “covert” partisanship. The manifest aspects of partisanship refer to statements of evaluation and preference by a writer-narrator.[39] However, even when a reporter makes no evident political evaluation, a story can support the interests and policies of a party. This second type of partisan support would be the latent bias of a newspaper.[40]

Turning to the actual numbers, the nineteenth century displayed a fairly constant amount of partisan journalism, but after 1900 this partisanship sharply decreased. Editorials are the genre in which newspapers most directly express their views. During the election seasons of the late nineteenth century, the majority of the sampled editorials were explicitly partisan. In 1900 and thereafter, opinion pieces that explicitly evaluated the parties or their policies became a declining share of the editorial page. In non-election periods, the fall in partisan editorials between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was even more dramatic. From the Gilded Age’s erratic eighteen to fifty-four percent, partisan editorials became a minuscule one to five percent. Regarding the news, the Detroit press typically filled about one-fourth of their news space with partisan articles during the presidential election campaigns of the late 1800s. In our century, news with explicit evaluations or biased selections greatly decreased to five or seven percent. News in non-election seasons saw a precipitous decline to only trace elements in the early 1900s.

Editorials in Presidential Election Seasons

	1868	1876	1884	1892	1900	1908	1916
Partisanship as a Percentage of Editorials[41]	81%	78%	62%	52%	29%	28%	17%

Editorials Non-Election Seasons

	1867	1875	1883	1891	1899	1907	1915
Partisanship	54%	40%	18%	34%	5%	1%	3%

News in Presidential Election Years

	1868	1876	1884	1892	1896	1900	1908	1916
Partisanship as Percentage of News Space[42]	15%	21%	39%	16%	40%	14%	7%	5%

News in Non Election Years

	1867	1871	1879	1887	1895	1903	1911	1915
Partisan News	18%	4%	4%	3%	9%	3%	0%	3%

To summarize, in the early twentieth century overt, explicit partisanship in the news all but disappeared. Partisanship in editorials decreased to a small but still present percentage. This limited editorial partiality however was confined to the election season. The newspaper no longer engaged in a prolonged, year-round effort to proselytize the voters or to continually display its formal allegiance to the party. Overt partisanship had disappeared. Covert bias had massively declined. The shifts in journalistic politics suggested by my general, quantitative measure of partisanship can be traced out in more detail by looking at the practices and rhetoric of Detroit newspapers in the early twentieth century.

The Critical Elections of 1896

In 1894-1896 Democrats suffered repeated and substantial losses to Republicans. These "critical elections" initiated a realignment in the relative electoral strength of the two parties and consequently altered the dynamics of electoral competition. The election turmoil and its fallout significantly undermined the symbolic and organizational resources of the two parties. Then, in the early 1900s, the Progressive reform movement renewed the attack on political parties and their central role in American public life. In this context of the declining power of the two parties and an anti-partisan ideology articulated by a movement of the middle-classes, newspapers reconstructed their role in the American public-political sphere. From partisan advocates, the press became neutral independent arbitrators of American public discussion.

The 1896 presidential election pitted William Jennings Bryan, representing a fusion of the populist and Democratic party, against the old-line establishment in the form of William McKinley. Reporting in this campaign waxed vastly partisan. Rebounding from the years of 1891 and 1892, this greater press fervor reflected the entrance of new economic issues into the political realm. The long-standing grievances of farmers, who were oppressed by inequitable railroad rates, declining prices for agricultural goods, deflationary currency that increased their long-term debts and inaccessible credit, burst into the two-party system.[43] These economic and sectional issues were contained within the policy cleavage between the major parties, but only at the cost of a reshuffling of the two parties' bases of popular support. The Democrats and Populists behind the presidential candidacy of Bryan became the party of protest and reform. However, the specific protest issues involved were quickly overtaken by a widespread hysteria. As the *Nation* declared, "Probably no man in civil life has succeeded in inspiring so much terror without taking life as Bryan."[44] *Detroit News* publisher, James Scripps, noted in his diary the passions involved in the 1896 battle of standards, and he remarked on the consequences for all those, such as Scripps himself, who were pledged to Bryan and silver: "The campaign was conducted with a bitterness never before known and silver advocates are ostracized."[45]

The newly charged party divisions of 1896 reshuffled the parties' electoral coalitions and necessarily affected the parties' affiliated newspapers. The career of William Quinby, long time proprietor of the state's major Democratic organ, the *Detroit Free Press*, illustrates these shifts in Detroit journalism. Quinby was in close association with the party establishment of Michigan.[46] But, Quinby's political partisanship did not stop him from maintaining close ties to Detroit's elites, no matter what their political persuasion. In fact, Quinby was a conservative, "Gold Democrat," and when upper-class, good government reformers campaigned against Democratic corruption in municipal government, the *Free Press* joined the reformers. Thus it came as no surprise that Quinby broke with his party when the Democratic national convention unseated Michigan's Gold Democrat delegation and nominated Bryan to represent the Democratic-Populist fusion.[47] Publisher Quinby issued a "Declaration of Independence" renouncing all partisanship.[48] *Free Press* city editor and erstwhile Republican, John Lodge, read Quinby's editorial declaration "with a great deal of pleasure."

> In fact, I had anticipated something of the sort for Mr. Quinby had always been a Gold Democrat...When I had read it Mr. Quinby said: John, does that satisfy you?" I said, "Of course it does...But do you remember what you told me not to inject my Black Republicanism into the paper? Does this mean the fetters are off so far as this campaign is concerned?" He smiled and said, "Maybe before long I'll be as black a Republican as you are."[49]

The departure of classic Democratic newspapers from the ranks of the party was typical for most daily Democratic papers nationwide.[50] Even liberal Democratic journals with a putative working-class audience such as Pulitzer's *New York World* or Edward Scripps' *Cincinnati Post*, not to mention conservative elite Democratic papers like the *New York Times*, fled the party in a mass exodus. At the close of the campaign Bryan remarked on this journalistic inequality between the two parties: "With all the newspapers of the country against us, our 6,500,000 votes is a vindicated of which we have a right to be proud."[51] Similarly, if less often, press loyalty to party was disrupted in the Republican ranks. As already noted, James E. Scripps took the *Detroit Tribune*, the official state Republican paper, out of the ranks of party faithful to the vociferous protests of leading Republican officials.[52]

Despite the break of two of Detroit's four newspapers from formal allegiance, the 1896 campaign reporting fell into the typical forms of partisan news. Indeed, the new class content of the election infused established partisan forms with more than usual energy. Reporters and papers elevated the two parties into the potential savior and destroyer of the American nation. The range of issues were seen as adequately contained in the positions and policies dividing the two parties. And the reporting fell into traditional forms of journalistic partisanship, both in the selection of words and in the genres.

The Progressive Movement Attack on Partisanship

1896 signaled a disruption in the traditional ties of party loyalty, both for individuals and for papers. But partisanship did not come under systematic attack until the early 1900s with the Progressive campaigns for reform. In 1904, the already weakened mechanisms of party organizational power were assailed by a coalition stretching from the Michigan Democratic party through independent reformers to insurgents within the Republican party. Detroit's Democratic papers took up the crusade of anti-party reform. While the crusade was initially adopted for purposes of the Democratic party's own propaganda, the crusade itself disseminated and legitimated anti-partisan sentiments. This movement for reform, continuous with Progressive era movements, found both true believers, such as George Booth, the publisher of the *Detroit News*, and opportunists in the ranks of the press. The anti-partisan campaign in the name of the public good exploited the growing weakness of parties and allowed newspapers to break decisively from the old party rituals.

To understand this rebellion against the bonds of party servitude, one must look at the fall-out from the realigning elections of 1894-1896. In Michigan, as in the nation as a whole, the elections precipitated a massive decline in voter participation. The "battle of standards" of the 1896 presidential election had generated remarkable passions and interest, and, in turn, a turnout of 95.3 percent of the electorate in Michigan, higher than the state's nineteenth century average in presidential contests. But after the battle of gold and silver, Michigan's turn-out immediately declined, reaching 78.9 percent in 1904 and its nadir for presidential elections, 53.7 percent in 1924.[53]

The fall in voter participation is variously explained by the disruption in the traditional roles of political parties. The upheaval of the 1896 presidential election campaign overturned the stead-fast party loyalties of millions of Americans. The *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit Tribune*, as official party organs for over thirty years, mirrored on a larger scale a multitude of individual decisions to break with one's party. Perhaps John Vallee Moran is typical of these partisans. His son writes that this patriarch of a wealthy and prominent Detroit family never impugned nor gossiped about anyone, except during presidential campaigns.

> [But every four years]...father expressed his opinions freely, frequently, and pungently. A Democrat by heritage and early conviction, he remained one until 1896. After that and until his death he was a staunch Republican. He couldn't accept William Jennings Bryan and the "Free Silver --16 to 1--Platform."[54]

Furthermore, the fall in vote correlates with a decline in significant two-party competition throughout vast regions of the country. In Michigan, as in the nation at large, the elections of 1894-1896 durably shifted the relative electoral strength of the two parties. The Democrats were precipitated into a position of weakness throughout the "Fourth Party System," 1896-1928. In 1894 and thereafter, Walter Dean Burnham remarks, Michigan's Democrats "were thrust into a virtually hopeless minority position."[55] Effective party competition died out in the state. The fall in voter turnout points to this weakness of the Democrats and the lack of party competition. The two parties no longer presented viable alternative policy choices to voters in elections.

What consequences did this political realignment have for Detroit's journals? The altered political constellation of this Fourth Party System, 1896-1928 (as evidenced in declining voter rates and increasing spit ticket voting), made politics in general, and partisan identities in particular, less salient for citizens. Political news became less of a dramatic, gripping story for readers. Detroit newspapers noted the readers' dwindling interest in politics. An editorial cartoon joked that the mayoralty race could not officially commence until the Detroit Tigers completed their baseball pennant race. And political news declined as a proportion of the total reported news. During election season, it fell from 47.5% in 1896 to 23.8% in 1916 (while references to parties in this political news also suffered a long-term decline from 58.2% to 23%.) (News in the non-election sample did not show any significant change.)

The nineteenth-century incentives, that had worked to enforce partisan correctness on competing Detroit dailies, no longer existed. Parties no longer possessed the capacity to define the political identities and loyalties of the populace. Partisanship would only hinder, not help, the journal retain its market share. Newspaper promises of political advocacy would be only a weak inducement to the reader to subscribe. In the previous century, parties had occasionally called for boycotts of press organs that became disloyal or recalcitrant. Such punitive threats would have little force when the party lost its command over the populace. But, in addition, the new electoral context also provided incentives for newspapers to jump the party ship. As the following section shows, Detroit newspapers joined the Democrats in advocating anti-party reform.

In 1904, Michigan Democrats, confronting sure election losses, shifted their political tactics. The Democratic Party launched its own attacks on "party machines" and pushed for political reforms, notably election primaries and the direct election of senators. Newspapers, too, were intimately involved in these efforts at reform. As the mass media helped to reconstruct the public-political domain, they also worked to reconstruct their own role in public communication.

Reform of the political system in Michigan followed a Democratic path.[56] With greater numbers of independent voters and the Democratic party severely discredited, the strategic electoral calculus for the two parties was fundamentally altered. The nineteenth-century's close electoral competition and fixed voter loyalties had turned the two parties into voter mobilizing machines. The party's chief task had been to rally its "troops" for maximum voter turnout at election battles. But now, voter allegiances were weakened and election victory margins were much more than a few percentage points. Insisting on the old party loyalties of the masses of voters would not ensure election victory. Morale-boosting in the press and rallying the troops in campaign tours would not help, even if numerous journals had not quit the Democrats. In this electoral context, the Democratic party had less invested in the electoral game as it was played by nineteenth-century rules.[57] Therefore, they sought new issues that would expand their electoral appeal. As Richard McCormick notes, the minority party is the traditional voice for innovation.[58] Democrats in the Wolverine state hooked up with insurgent Republicans to make broad public appeals for political reform in 1904.

Thus, in Michigan, Democrats were often the leaders in calls for political reform. In 1904 the Democrats nominated reformer Professor Woodbridge Ferris for governor. Ferris gained the support of Detroit's Democratic newspapers, the *News-Tribune* and the *Times*, and was opposed by the classically Republican *Detroit Journal*. The papers joined traditional partisan press tactics to several innovations. As in the past, the press published partisan jibes; polemical editorials; letters to the editor that supposedly represented spontaneous, popular sentiment for the favored party; biased news accounts of political rallies for the purpose of convincing readers that the newspaper's candidate had right and voter might on his side[59]; and news stories depicting the social implications of the two parties' programs. In addition, in the news and in the editorials, the papers repeatedly interpreted the issues of the campaign through the stereotyped frame of "the people" (as Democrats) resisting the blandishments of the Republican party machine.

For all the emphatic exuberance of the newspapers whooping it up in the election campaign, 1904 newspaper politics were also strikingly different from previous years. The avowed campaign program for the papers which were previously Democratic -- the *News*, the *Times*, and the *Tribune* --was political reform. They were breaking from the power of "party machines." Furthermore, this rhetoric of reform and nonpartisanship was complicated by the weak position of the Democrats and the initiation of primary elections in Detroit's local contests.

In addition, the press, especially the *Evening News*, supported candidates in both Democrat and Republican camps. In part this was a specific political strategy when the Republican party possessed an almost overwhelmingly hold on popular affections and votes. Democrats and their papers conceded the election of Theodore Roosevelt to the White House and tried to divorce the national contest from state politics. Thus, the *News* editorialized:

> Intelligent observers must concede the state to Mr. Roosevelt by a plurality which promises to be unprecedented, if a full vote turns out. If it were strictly a party contest there would be no enthusiasm, because in such a case the result would be foreordained by the power of the natural majorities. Michigan is under rational conditions a

> Republican state by an overwhelming majority...in this year...a strictly democratic campaign would have been ridiculously impotent..."[60]

Consequently, any Democratic campaign for state office could enjoy a chance of success only by separating the state contest from the national, and the political issues from the operation of party loyalties. The *Evening News* instructed voters how to prepare their ballots in order to split their votes between Roosevelt for the presidency and Democrat reformers for Michigan offices. And, defending this heretical practice of ticket-splitting, the *News* asserted that "many republicans are bolting for Ferris, though naming Roosevelt as their presidential choice."[61]

Indeed Democrat Ferris with the support of Detroit Progressive journals conducted his gubernatorial campaign as a general onslaught on the entangling webs of partisan commitment. The election was run as a crusade claiming that the issues were above traditional partisan loyalties and that the very crux of the campaign was a fight against the corruption that followed from such ritualistic partisanship. Furthermore, Ferris tried to divorce his issues from traditional Democratic or Republican associations. Not surprisingly, the Republicans responded by seeking to invoke the old issues and allegiances that had forged their overwhelming majority in Michigan. The Democrats asserted, "It is not in any sense a contest between the two great political parties, but a revolt of the people of Michigan against an evil system which has deprived them of the powers of government."[62]

However strategically useful, the rhetoric and tactics of nominee Ferris and the Detroit journals clearly went beyond being only a clever gambit for a Democratic party desperate for power.[63] Their arguments ended up attacking all party ties. For example, the *News* published one such argument of Ferris against continued partisanship as a boxed quote with enlarged type. The headline read "Principle Above Party," as Ferris preached, "You voters have got to stand on principle. You can be either republican or democrat but IF YOU ARE SLAVES OF EITHER PARTY WITHOUT PRINCIPLE YOU ARE PART TO THE WORST KIND OF MACHINE..." This publicity popularized the reformers' criticisms of parties in strong rhetoric and simplified demonological terms. Such a generalized attack on partisanship would be sure to rebound on the Democrats too, hindering continued party loyalty and organization

The *Evening News* published similar slashing attacks on "blind loyalty" to any party. Here the *News* typically invoked Progressive era ideology of the purification of democracy which opposed pure party line voting. Against such blind obedience "they extolled independent voting as the mark of the educated, intelligent class."[64] Other tactics of the News, beyond its campaign for Ferris, undermined traditional conceptions of loyalty to the party. Most importantly, the *News* crossed party lines, endorsing candidates without regard for their formal party affiliation. Rather, the *News*' declared that it chose only those candidates "who may be depended upon to advocate the principles [of reform.]"[65]

Such a political stance points to the press and political reformers' immersion in the Progressive reform movement. If not true believers of Progressive philosophy, newspapers and political reformers at least drew upon the Progressives' diverse rhetorics of reform. This positive program of political reconstruction cannot be deduced just from changed political conditions following the 1896 election. As Skowronek explains, the 1896 realignment merely released political actors from the cost-benefit calculus specific to the Third Party System, with its emphasis on party organization and party loyalty. The new opportunities, however, did not dictate the shape of the new political world or the new journalism.[66] Only the elaboration of a new political culture and a novel occupational ethic could permanently sever the newspaper from all party relations and political alliances. Moreover, this upholding of the press as impartial depended upon the idea that journalism, in particular, and middle-class professionals, in general, could produce a disinterested and objective knowledge, a knowledge which stands apart from the contentions of politics. Such a new cultural model was necessary to legitimate and stabilize a new political role for the press in a transformed public sphere. In the end, reformers in the polity and in the press interacted to forge a new political universe.[67]

The Fall elections of 1904 revealed the political fruit of all this attempted sabotage of partisanship. As already noted, variance or ticket-splitting escalated in 1904. Detroit papers predicted Roosevelt's victory in Michigan and he achieved a landslide in the state and in the nation. Roosevelt garnered 361,000 votes compared to the Democrat Parker's 134,000, an extremely lopsided vote. However, the gubernatorial race was much closer. Reformer Ferris lost with 223,000 to the Republican machine candidate's 284,000. In voting for president and governor, approximately, 78,000 voters (or sixteen percent) split their ballots between the two parties while 11,000 balked at voting for any presidential candidate after voting for governor.

In this Progressive environment, the newspapers for both pragmatic and ideological reasons strenuously advocated political reform and independence from strict party lines. Their campaigns with all their strident exhortations continued aspects of past partisan practices, and yet also helped to reconstruct the political universe and what it meant to participate politically. They undermined the popular partisan loyalties that had worked to bind newspapers to parties.

The New Structure of Primary Elections

Other changes more directly undermined the political relevance of parties and newspaper partisanship in the campaign of 1904. The fall election season in Detroit was prefaced by primary elections. Detroit had already obtained a "local option" of primary elections, even if the state Republican party was unwilling to extend such legislation to the state as a whole. Within the Republican and Democrat parties, candidate were jousting for the right to gain the parties' official nomination for various city offices from Mayor on down to coroner.

Primary elections sparked a number of notable changes in the political universe, changes which attacked the relevance of parties.[68] In primaries, the party could no longer act as a cue for the mass public in guiding their choices among the various candidates for public office. The cluster of traditional associations, policy choices and governing consequences that voters attached to parties were not available as a basis for discrimination between different candidates.[69] Without the mooring of party, voters were adrift in electoral confusion. One local expert analyzed the 1904 primary with its bewildering number of swarming politicians:

> The scramble [of candidates] furnishes considerable humor to the onlookers though the principals cannot find it so very funny. The scratching and leg-running of the candidates for coroner, for instance, to let even a small section of the public know who they are and what they want...has become the joke of the campaign. It is a very clever citizen who will know his own candidates when he comes up against a three-foot city ticket...The big guns running for mayoralty...and other important offices have completely overshadowed the field, and what extra public mental energy is left is mostly taken up with state and national politics.[70]

For reformers such as *Evening News* publisher Scripps, the replacement of corrupt party conventions by primaries would purify democracy. The voter's rational choice would replace blind party loyalty and the secret string-pulling of money. To educate voters in the performance of their civic duties, new knowledge was needed. Without parties, various other agencies stepped in to bridge the gap between citizens and politicians. Civic organizations and interest groups sought to guide voters past the potential mishaps of primary elections and the tricks and ruses of the old party machines. For instance, Scripps' evening paper gave extensive space to the Municipal League for their exhaustive list of candidates replete with summary evaluations. This civic group was presumably an independent, non-partisan group whose evaluation reflected no political agenda except efficient government.[71] Other intermediaries found entrance into the pages of the press. The *Times,* for example, in its column called "Political Straws" reported the endorsements of various civic groups along with those of local party clubs.[72] In addition, the *News* surveyed candidates on the issue of municipal ownership of the city transportation system and other questions. They polled the politicians so "that the people might understand the views on this question of the men who ask their votes at the primaries."[73]

Newspapers, both as collectors of information useful to voters and in their editorial endorsements, sought to guide the voters in their choices. Just as in the past, papers were one of the chief public arbitrators of the public's will. However, now journals were not supplying cues to voters as a representative of the party. Separate from parties but still central organs of public communication, the papers gained an enormous power to select the words and recommendations that reached the citizenry. Newspapers, such as the *Free Press*, the *Journal* and the *Evening News*, built up an autonomous cache of legitimacy as trustworthy representatives of the public interest.[74]

The pages of the press became pluralized. The political space was filled with more voices than just the parties and their disputatious factions. Any voice, given adequate money or legitimacy as a civic group, could gain entry into the supposedly neutral medium of mass publicity, i.e. the press. The sampled 1904 edition of the *Detroit Times* printed nineteen columns of political advertisements or about twenty-there percent of the available space.[75] Michigan publisher Edmund Booth wrote about the press' role as an open medium for various political voices:

> We must not forget, however, that a daily newspaper is a kind of public trust and that the true publisher is the one that tries to handle the thing impersonally--equal rights for all, special privileges for none.[76]

The power of parties, both in controlling nominations and in guiding voters' choices, was under siege in the new primary system. Party, as an ongoing symbolic system directing voters through the maze of choices, was inapplicable in primary elections.[77] Candidates in primaries were forced to go it alone.[78] Those seeking office were unable to command party symbols or organization in fighting their fellow Republicans or Democrats. Newspapers as a central medium of public communication were opened to diverse organized voices in civil society. This pluralization of the news allowed new voices into the public realm and, at the same time, displaced parties. Formerly, the party possessed the automatic right to speak to the citizenry through the columns of the partisan press. Now, the press refereed such public speech for all political actors. Thus, primaries, with their admixture of reformer propaganda touting the virtue of independence, effectively constituted an attack on party power. These changes undermined the attachment of voters to parties and made papers better able to break from the constraints of formal partisanship.

The New Journalistic Ethic of Independence and Public Service

By 1908 the rhetoric of non-partisanship was embedded in a new set of journalistic practices and institutional opportunities and constraints. To reiterate, this new ethic was not just a passive adaptation to the novel opportunities opened up by the political changes of the Fourth Party System, Progressive era reforms, and the new economics of the retail revolution. It was also a positive project, articulated forcefully by newspaper owners and editors. Detroit publishers, like other journalists across the nation, were driven by a vision of a new ordering of society.[79] James and Edward Scripps, James Schermerhorn, publisher of the *Detroit Times*, and George Booth, director of the *Detroit News*, were advocates for the movements of social reform of the Progressive period.[80] Nevertheless, the new ethic with all its high-minded pronouncements established no independent standpoint from which journalists could criticize American society. When the movement passions of Progressive reform had ebbed, the journalistic ethic of public service and independence became simple conformity to mass sentiment and submission to the viewpoints of political officials and economic elites.

The pronouncements of Michigan publisher George G. Booth provide a useful case study for examining in detail this new ethic of journalism. In 1906, Booth controlled Michigan's largest paper, the *Detroit Evening News*, as well as a string of eight smaller papers throughout the state.[81] His profession of a high-minded ethic of press independence reveals his appropriation of Progressive cultural motifs. But, Booth's editorials, his public proclamations, and his private correspondence also indicate the legitimating utilities as well as limits of journalism's new occupational ethic.

The most prominent theme in George Booth's reform ideals was "public service," a note repeatedly touted in his private and public statements. Booth asserted his devotion to public service in public platitudes:

> A newspaper desiring a position of prominence, influence and profit in its field must learn to serve. The more thoroughly and efficiently it serves the uplifting of constructive life of the community, the greater its financial reward and the longer it will enjoy life.
>
> ...Make your newspaper SERVE, constructively serve the public interest first; your reward will come without great effort.[82]

He also declaimed on public service in private correspondence to his brother Edmund. The letters between brothers served the dual function of coordinating the management of their chain of Booth papers and of intellectual consultation. For instance, on July 7, 1907 he wrote:

> We are conscious that we have no other ambition in a newspaper way than to do those things that mean success, the main purpose in such efforts being to insure good government and to encourage anything that tends to the welfare and happiness of the people in general.[83]

In Booth's letters, such journalistic devotion to public service was united with the Progressive reform tradition. He believed that journalism played an especially crucial role in the movement's efforts to uplift and reform society.[84] Thus, Booth wrote his brother:

> Of course in the minds of many, a newspaper is merely a vendor of news, and the publisher is not particular as to the kind of news...[But] it would not be a newspaper if it did not hold up the mirror in a general way to the people every day. Nothing is feared so much as publicity by the wrongdoer, and by the free publication of all kinds of news the people of this country have become enlightened and do not act in the dark. The tremendous upheaval going on at present...[is] in a sense chargeable to the press.[85]

An ethic of journalistic independence guided Booth in this model of commitment to the public good. He emphasized that neither his own interests nor those of his partners and staff were involved in the selection of the paper's editorial content. The newspaper must guard its independence so as to avoid all entangling and incriminating economic ties. Newspaper workers, in fact, had to observe a rigorous code of behavior. Booth insisted that owners, editors, and reporters must resist the blandishments offered by the political and economic powers.[86]

More importantly, political independence implied that the newspaper had no permanent ties to any individual, group or party, and that general principles, not particular interests, governed its editorial columns.[87] Indeed, Booth declared it was not particularly advantageous in the contemporary era for any journal to receive political patronage or to be identified with particular causes or interests. On the one hand, such public payoffs would deter the partisan paper from pursuing the rigors of real journalistic competition. Living on political easy street, it would pose little competitive threat to Booth's newspapers.[88] On the other hand, Booth believed the public itself was less tolerant of newspapers being used to promote private interests. An attitude of suspicion guided the modern reader. Educated by the persistent anti-monopoly propaganda of the Progressives, the public perused the columns of the news for signs of concealed political interests. Implicitly Booth was pointing to the broad institutional supports for nonpartisanship in the early 1900s: expanded advertising as a source of newspaper remuneration and a public adverse to the promotion of particular political views and party interests.[89]

Such were the ideals that Booth vigorously upheld and which guided the *News* in its onslaught on partisanship. This journalistic ethic helped the *Evening News* in its alliance with the Democratic party to break free of all claims of partisan allegiance and to deny ongoing formal ties to a party. Public service and impartiality became the rhetorical mainstay of journalism's self conception and a defense against all external criticism.

Public Service as Legitimation

Journalists used the idea of public service to deny that the individual publisher, editor or reporter gained any particular remuneration or advantage from specific news decisions. Rather, the journalist, as a professional, was devoted to the higher public interest and was rewarded only for serving that public good. As Booth defensively wrote, "Our policies in the conduct of the *News* are not private policies...We have no ulterior motive, no private axe to grind."[90] Booth's strategy here in replying to the criticisms of a prominent businessman points to the general role of such journalistic ethics. They are designed to insulate the newspaper from political attacks and they represent a fundamentally reformulated basis of legitimacy for newspapers after the last century's justifications of explicit, formal, press partisanship.

The language of public service in journalism accomplishes three political purposes. First, the ideals of public service and independence from social interests helps to legitimate the newspaper's selection and interpretation of stories and to insulate the press from external critics. It guarantees journalism a degree of autonomy from outside criticism, intrusion, and control. In Gaye Tuchman's words, it is a "strategic ritual." Like all "professional altruistic codes of ethics, [they] are defenses against the potential distrust of their clients."[91]

Secondly, the rhetoric hides from reporters themselves the political biases of their choices. Notions of impartiality and expertise assure journalists of the purity of their motives and the truth of the knowledge they create, even as it disguises the political processes involved in the coordination of news decisions by a corporate bureaucracy. The news selections of reporters are justified and negotiated through a language of professional values, likely audience appeal, and common sense understandings of the nature of the world.[92]

Lastly, the new legitimacy disguises which social interests actually do gain a hearing from the press. The newspaper claims to be impartial. Its selection of the news does not privilege one social class over another. No group because of economic wealth, political power or ethnic heritage has any special ties to the media or the determination of what is newsworthy. In fact, Booth implicitly linked the ethic of public service to the new worries over the power of the press occasioned by the decline of newspaper competition and the abandonment of explicit partisanship.

> Elimination of competition puts an end to the miserable wrangling that once characterized so many newspapers. It assures a community of steadiness of purpose on the part of the publisher; poised in the representation of news and opinion...It tends also to reduce contention in the community. On the other hand, the paper which is fortunate enough to occupy a field alone where once it had competition must beware smugness...of employing its strength unjustly...[etc.][93]

We might say that under conditions of monopoly or oligopoly, newspapers were open to more serious charges of bias. To escape accusations of bias and illegitimate monopolization of the public arena, newspapers had to avoid all evidence of partiality. They could no longer justify presenting merely one political opinion when they had no competition or were, indeed, seeking to reduce the number of rival papers. In situations where the public had an active distrust of monopolies, newspapers devised justifications drawing on governmental and professional notions of public service to insulate themselves from criticism and from charges of merely serving their own interests. In the era of reform they appropriated, and subscribed to, the widespread new public codes of public service as against any type of partisanship. Such occupational ethics secured a place for their particular function free from immediate suspicion by the populace.

Publishers no longer upheld the old, partisan justifications for a newspaper's freely expressed point of view in opposition to other viewpoints. In the nineteenth century, newspapers possessed an explicit right to political speech. They had such rights, both, as an adjunct to parties as popular political representatives, and as free citizens engaged in public dialogue. They were participating members of the public sphere. In the twentieth century, however, the press claims to be above the "wrangling" and conflict of the public-political sphere. Independent and unconnected to any fixed political point of view, the paper's news floats above political contention.[94] It is not part of the swirl of opinions and partisan preferences. It no longer aspires to serve one particular segment of public opinion, and does not possess ties to any political organization in its advocacy of policies or in the pursuit of political power. If a journal adopts an active, evaluative, crusading voice, it is in the name of shared public interests of the entire community.[95] In Jeffrey Alexander's analysis, the media no longer "produce sharply divergent perspectives of public events." They avoid the self-conscious, explicit articulation of norms in conflict with other perspectives.[96] As bearers of political speech, they are a neutral medium of communication. Their words come from the lips of impartial technical experts or non-political representatives of the community's will.

The ethics of George Booth and his brothers were part and parcel of the Progressive era's political vision. In the early twentieth century at the height of the movement's power, newspaper publishers and reformers articulated a new ideal of American politics and of the arena of public discussion. The polity would be purged of all private interests, hidden deals, and corrupt powers.

Without the influence of party machines, city bosses, corporate graft, ethnic groups looking for government handouts, and biased partisan papers, the citizenry could examine political issues openly and reach agreement on policies reflecting the public good. A newly purified public opinion would function without the previous distortions, misrepresentations and manipulations. More specifically, with partisanship and corruption banished, the "intelligent and educated classes" could unite and guide public opinion to the common good.[97] This utopian project assumed the existence of an "underlying harmony of social interests" that would allow public opinion to achieve open and rational agreement. No deep and enduring social divisions, nor accumulations of social and economic power, prevented the triumph of persuasive, rational speech. In more bureaucratic-professional variants of this political project, politics would be transformed into technical decision-making under the province of experts and managers.[98]

This Progressive cultural vision joined with the new political situation after the 1896 election to help reconstruct the American political universe. The reformation of American newspapers from partisan to impartial and independent was part of this process. The journals responded to the decreased power of parties and the reformist ideology that attacked all partisan affiliation as blind or corrupt.

Conclusion

This essay has argued that a "political-institutional" theory is necessary to explain both, journalism's particular selection of speakers and events for reporting, and the broader political stance of the press in the public sphere. Drawing upon a case study of journalism in Detroit over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this paper showed how shifts in the distribution of power and authority in the public sphere account for changes in the style of reporting, whether as active partisan advocate, neutral effaced recorder, or impartial expert analyst. In the nineteenth century, the overwhelming authority of the political parties in the public realm suggested to newspaper readers and writers that there existed no independent perspective from which to describe the clashes and collisions of American social life. In such a politicized and polarized world, journalism was necessarily and explicitly aligned with the political powers that be. The Detroit press posed as an emotional public advocate for either the Democrats or the Republicans. Addressing an audience of loyal party members and associated with the authority of a party, newspapers were free to present partisan evaluations and to explore in detail events that supposedly revealed the consequences of governmental policies.

The death knell for partisan papers sounded in 1896. The 1896 presidential election campaign introduced new economic issues into the competition between the Democrats and Republican, and disrupted the traditional, partisan allegiances of both voters and papers. These "realigning elections" transformed the relative strength of the two parties with Republicans assuming dominance at the national level and in the North and West. The consequent conditions of electoral competition in the "fourth party system" (1896-1928) helped to undermine the centrality of parties in American public life. In addition, the early 1900s saw numerous reform movements emerge to attack the remnants of party loyalty. With parties significantly weakened, Detroit's daily journals issued their declarations of political independence and joined Progressive reformers in their efforts to reconstruct the public arena. Freed from party control, papers were not however relieved of the burden of justifying their choice of words and deeds for publicity. Publishers and editors drew upon Progressive rhetorics of the public interest and professional expertise to maintain their independence and insulate their news choices from criticism and dispute. However, such a posture of apolitical independence, gave the press only weak legitimacy to pursue their own news agenda and to present their own perspective. In all contexts of controversy, the press was forced to defer to the opinion of legitimate political authorities in the public realm.[99]

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[1] The classic discussion of the "public sphere" and its normative role in modern mass democracies is Juergen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* trans. by T. Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989.) On the relevance of the public sphere for media studies see Daniel Hallin, "The American News Media: A Critical Theory Perspective," in John Forester (ed.) *Critical Theory and Public Life* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985.)

[2] Michael Schudson, "The Menu of Media Research," in Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Muriel Cantor (eds.) *Media, Audiences and Social Structure* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986.)

[3] Cf. Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 9.

[4] A portrait of two contemporary organizations of the political public sphere and the differing political stances of the press is presented in Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini, "Speaking of the President: Political Structure and Representational Form in U.S. and Italian Television News," *Theory and Society* 13 (1984.)

[5] The Detroit case has the merit of political representativeness. This booming midwestern, industrial city demonstrates the "main dynamics" of American politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. While party organization was stronger in the northeast and weaker in the newer, western states, the main national trend throughout the late nineteenth century was strong party organizations in significant competition. Detroit's Democrats and Republicans maintained strong party organizations in close electoral competition throughout the nineteenth century. [Michigan and Detroit are representative of both the political dynamics at the national level and the typical pattern in Northern states and cities. [See Walter D. Burnham, *The Current Crisis in American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) ch. 1.] In the twentieth century, with the party transformations that followed the critical elections of 1894-1896, Detroit again conformed to the majority pattern. The Republicans became entrenched in the state as the dominant party. Then, in the early 1900s, Detroit and Michigan suffered the political turmoil and reform typical to the Progressive era. In addition, Detroit was a large enough city to have a press that displayed the full range of partisan and factional divisions typical to the nineteenth century city. Yet this growing industrial metropolis was small enough to make the coding of the existing population of daily journals a reasonable proposition.

[6] Discussion of the standard practices of nineteenth-century partisan journalism can be found in Gerald Baldasty, *The Commercialization of News in the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), ch. 1; Richard Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest*(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971); Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865-1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.)

[7] Some surveys of the sociology of the news are: Michael Schudson, "The Sociology of News Production Revisited," in James Curran and Michael Gurevich (eds.) *Mass Media and Society* (New York: Edward Arnold, 1991); Schudson, "Menu of Media Research"; Gaye Tuchman, "Mass Media Institutions," in Neil Smelser (ed.) *Handbook of Sociology*; and Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), ch. 10.

[8] Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News*, 185. And see Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 134.

[9] Nina Eliasoph, "Routines and the Making of Oppositional News," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 5 (1988); Timothy Cook, "Domesticating the Crisis," in W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz (eds.) *Taken By Storm* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.) On the predisposition to see quote and interview legitimate and important officials see Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual," 672-3; Leon V. Sigal, "Who? Sources Make the News," in Michael Schudson and Robert Manoff (eds.) *Reading the News* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986); Daniel Hallin, *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 71-2.

[10] Leon Sigal, *Reporters and Officials: The Organization and Politics of Newsmaking* (Lexington: D. C. Heath and Co., 1973); Mark Fishman, *Manufacturing the News*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980).

[11] As Paul Hirsch writes, they in fact take up the perspective of the manager of the organization viewing her/his specific task environment. Hirsch, "Processing Fads and Fashions," in Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson (eds.) *Rethinking Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 316.

[12] Gaye Tuchman, "The News Net," *Social Research* 45 (Summer 1978); Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester, "Accidents, Scandals, and Routines: Resources for Insurgent Methodology," in Gaye Tuchman (ed.) *The TV Establishment* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1974), 54.

[13] See for example, Douglas Kellner, *Television and the Crisis of Democracy* (Boulder: Westview, 1990), Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching*, 9-13 and ch. 10; and the British Birmingham School.

[14] The selections and exclusions built into the institutional organization and rule system of the polity has been theorized by Claus Offe. See the discussion in Jean L. Cohen, *Class and Civil Society* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982) 197-8, 252-3. Theda Skocpol provides a strong portrait of the selectivities and filters in the American political system. She calls her approach a "structured polity perspective" in her *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 41-60. The classic source for a consideration of such institutionalized constraints implicit in the institutionalized order of political competition is E. E. Schattschneider and his definition of the "mobilization of bias" in his *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press, 1975.)

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[15] Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, ch. 1; Charles Bright, "The State in the United States During the Nineteenth Century," in Susan Harding and Charles Bright (eds.) *Statemaking and Social Movements* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984); Stephen Skowronek, *Building A New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[16] *Free Press*, 7 May 1868 "The Opening of the Fall Campaign."

[17] *Free Press*, 7 May 1868. And see *Union*, 22 May 1872.

[18] *Detroit Post*, 16 July 1872, 2 c.2.

[19] McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics*, 37-8, 40, 17, 21. And see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) ch. 4; Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1965); and Robert Wuthnow, *Meaning and Moral Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.) An important source for McGerr is Baker, *Affairs of Party*. Also cf. Theda Skocpol and John Ikenberry, "The Political Formation of the American Welfare State," *Comparative Social Research*, V. 6 (1983), 93.

Jensen also presents a typology of five different political "styles" in his"Armies, Admen and Crusaders: Types of Presidential Election Campaigns," *History Teacher* (January 1969). Thomas Leonard analyzes various "vernaculars" and dramatic forms of journalism and politics in his *The Power of the Press: The Birth of American Political Reporting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[20] Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), chs. 8-9.

[21] The *Post*'s statement "Under New Management," 1 Aug. and 7 Nov. 1884. On a pervasive publicly displayed partisanship see also William Gienapp, "'Politics Seem To Enter into Everything': Political Culture in the North, 1840-1860" in Stephen Maizlish (ed.) *Essays on American Ante-bellum Politics, 1840-1860* (Arlington, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1982); and Jean Baker, *Affairs of Party; The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[22] In the period from 1867 through 1892 the Detroit papers (excluding the *Evening News*) almost always printed endorsements in the sampled presidential season issue. (Exceptions: the *Post and Tribune* in 1880, the *Post* in 1872.) The endorsements typically led off the editorial page and filled from a quarter to half a column of print.

[23] Virtually all the Detroit dailies sampled (except for the *Evening News*) carried notices of their party's meetings. The newspaper issue from the Fall Presidential election season published notices of the gatherings for rallies, speeches and organization meetings. These were published day after day. But also the issue sampled for Spring of the preceding year printed each day a call to convene the party's late Spring state-wide and county nominating conventions. The Spring state convention would select candidates to run for the university regents and for the state supreme court.

[24] The partisan journal tried to be the paper of record for its political group.

[25] Partisan "jibes" appeared in about eighty percent of my sampled papers from 1872 through 1900, including both election and non-election years. They took as their target the other party's policies, personnel, or election chances. The quantity of these partisan witticisms fluctuated between two and twenty-four, with usually about five or six. Before 1872 there are less jibes.

[26] For example, *Detroit Journal*, 2-7 July 1892.

[27] McGerr, *Decline of Popular Politics*, 23; Leonard, *Power of the Press*, ch. 7; Morton Keller, *Affairs of State: Public Life in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 242; Jensen, "Armies, Admen and Crusaders," 38, 45, 50.

[28] *Free Press*, 11 July 1876, 1.

[29] In my sampled issues two such Detroit Republican rallies occurred; in 1884 a chronological decription of the events and a verbatim report of the speech filled a full page of text in a four page paper. In 1896, two and a half pages were devoted to the Gold Democrat-Republican rally by the *Journal* and the *Free Press*.

[30] *Advertiser and Tribune*, 31 Oct. 1876. A similar account is contained in the *Post*, 15 August 1876, 2.

[31] Jensen, "Armies, Admen and Crusaders," 36-8. And compare Skowronek's explication of "the strategic calculation of government officials as they pursued political power" and how this affected the possibilities for civil service reform. Skowronek, *Building A New American State*, 166-70.

[32] Of course, in our time the political agenda also often defines the news agenda. In election campaigns the strategic set of issues and themes publicized by the candidates typically determines what is reported to the exclusion of other issues. See Marilyn Roberts and Maxwell McComb, "Agenda Setting and Political Advertising: Origins of the News Agenda," *Political Communication* 11 (July-September 1994) 249-62. However, contemporary journalism covers "both sides" in an attempt at balance. Nineteenth-century reporting took a stand on one of the sides. Furthermore, the newsworthiness of today's political agenda stems from its supposed "factual" importance, but in the last century the importance of the political agenda derived from the newspaper's commitment to the party.

[33] See Chapter 2 of my dissertation which is a case-study of the news selections in the early Reconstruction period and how they reflected the divisions between the two parties. "Transformations in the American Public Sphere: News and Politics, 1865-1920," University of California, Berkeley (1994).

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[34] *Post*, 24 Jan. 1867, 4.

[35] Cf. Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest*, 194-7; Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment*(New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 209-10, 40-1; Jean Folkerts, "Functions of the Reform Press," *Journalism History*, V. 12 (Spring 1985) 22-4.

[36] My discussion draws on the paired complements of political society and civil society first articulated by de Tocqueville. For a recent discussion of the constraints on different types of action offered by these two social arenas see Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992)

[37] On the ideals of the public sphere see Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*. On the political ideals of republicanism for the press see John Nerone, "A Local History of the Early U.S. Press: Cincinnati, 1793-1848," in William Solomon and Robert McChesney (eds.) *Ruthless Criticism: New Perspectives in United States Communication History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.) Nerone also discusses the press's departure from such ideals under the pressures of partisanship and commercialization in the 1830s.

[38] Cf. Jeffrey Alexander, "The Mass Media in Systemic, Historical and Comparative Perspective," in Elihu Katz and Tamas Szecisko (eds.) *Mass Media and Social Change* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981.) Michael Schudson in his classic social history of the press also describes the emergence of a modern news press that is no longer partisan. He situates this change in the Jacksonian era of the 1830s. In this decade, the shared beliefs of a "democratic, market society," otherwise known as liberal individualism, became dominant. Here, Schudson follows Richard Hofstadter's "consensus" interpretation. The emergence of a dominant consensus of liberal individualism points to the emergence of a social realm freed from political polarization and conflicitng political interpertations. The change from the reporting of opinions and advocacy to facts, we may say, reflects the emergence of this social realm free from political polarization.

[39] These categories can be defined more precisely through the literary theory of "enunciation." Enunciation designates all those grammatical features of the written text that refer back to the author by drawing attention to the organizing, judging or analyzing of the author. In manifest bias, the text displays its political evaluations as the work of the author. In covert bias, evaluations come from a quoted speaker, or else the evaluation is left to the reader to draw out from the facts reported. Cf. Tzvetan Todorov, "Enunciation," in Todorov and Oswald Ducrot (eds.) *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Sciences of Language* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), 323-7.

The specific coding criteria was to count as overtly biased any article with three or more statements of partisan evaluation by the reporter. If the article was under three inches long then it was overtly biased with two or more statements of preference. In any case, articles tended to cluster around one end of the coding spectrum or the other--either explicitly evaluative or totally non-evaluative.

[40] In the late 1800s, the most evident form of this latent preference was the grossly unequal amounts of news space that the partisan paper gave to the words and deeds of one party over the other.

Adequate coding of these stories depends upon historical background knowledge of the articulated policy divisions between the two parties. In the technical language of content analysis this is the "context unit." Klaus Krippendorf calls this background knowledge in coding "context units." See his *Content Analysis* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980), 59-60. Fortunately for the researcher, the policy cleavages of the two parties are repeatedly elaborated on the editorial page of the partisan paper.

The content analysis coded all the articles of all the daily newspapers of Detroit published on the sampled day. (And measured in terms of space. News on market transactions and sports were not coded.) In 1867, at the start of this study, Detroit possessed four daily papers. At various times the total increased to five papers but diminished to three in 1919. Days for coding were selected on the basis of a stratified sample. American political life displays a cyclical nature following the periodic schedule of elections. Consequently, political news coverage displays strong differences between election season and non-election times. To avoid any confusion this cycle might introduce to the search for long-term changes, the sample was organized to include a newspaper edition from the presidential election campaign and an edition from non-election season. A copy of the October 15th issue of all journals was analyzed for all presidential election years, 1868-1920, and an issue of all dailies was analyzed in the electoral off-season 1867-1919. (February 15th of the year preceding the presidential election year.)

[41] In the sampled issues all editorials were coded for their political bias and their length was measured. The percentage is a percentage of the paper's space devoted to editorials.

[42] "Total partisan news" includes both the overt bias of "reporter's partisan evaluations" and the newspapers' covert bias. An example of this latter covert bias would be a report of a speech made by an official of the favored party without a matching story from the opposed party.

[43] Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment*; Neil Schmitz, "Naturalism Undone," *American Literary History* 1 (Winter 1989).

[44] Baehr, *New York Tribune*, 255; Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967) ch. 7; Bryan notes the various bitter attacks in his speeches and in his campaign retrospective. William J. Bryan, *The First Battle: A Story of the Campaign of 1896* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey Co., 1896), 467, 471, 474-5, 493, 603. And see Baehr, *New York Tribune*, 254-55.

[45] James E. Scripps, Diary, 31 Dec. 1896. (Wilkerson negatives, Cranbrook Archives.) This entry summarized the year's main event for Scripps.

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[46] On Quinby and the Democratic elite see Brewster Palmer, “William E. Quinby,” and Arthur Pound, “Donald Dickerson” both in Earl D. Babst and Lewis G. Vander Velde (eds.) *Michigan and the Cleveland Era* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1948.)

[47] On the class allegiances of newspaper editors at this time see Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), 332-69.

[48] See the *Free Press*' “Declaration of Independence,” 12 July 1896, 12. The *New York Times* also issued such a declaration.

[49] John C. Lodge, *I Remember Detroit* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1949), 60.

[50] Hearst was a notable exception. Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest*, 272-5; David Sarasohn, *The Party of Reform: Democrats in the Progressive Era* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989), 10-11; Baehr, *New York Tribune*, 254-5; Philip VanderMeer, “Political Crisis and Third Parties: The Gold Democrats of Michigan,” *Michigan Historical Review* V.15, no. 2 (1989.)

[51] William Livingstone, *The Republican Party*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), 501. The disparity nationwide between journals loyal to the Democrats as compared to the Republicans decisively affected the two presidential candidates' campaign tactics. Assured of journalistic attention, McKinley could conduct his campaign from the porch of his Ohio home. Bryan, instead, was forced to tour the country, giving speeches at every train whistlestop. On the differing campaigns see Matthew Josephson, “The Bryan Campaign,” in George Whicher (ed.) *William Jennings Bryan and the Campaign of 1896* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1953.) Bryan, *The First Battle*, 561, 447.

[52] For further discussion of the Detroit Tribune in 1896 see my essay “”

[53] See Walter D. Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York: W. W. Morton & Co., 1970), 114.

[54] J. Bell Moran, *The Moran Family: Two Hundred Years in Detroit* (Detroit: Alved of Detroit, 1949), 65

[55] Burnham, *Critical Elections*, 114

[56] This route to reform is similar to the one Sarasohn has described for national politics in his *The Party of Reform*

[57] Also, Sarasohn claims that the Democrats, with constituents on the outside of the establishment, were more hospitable to reform. Sarasohn, *The Party of Reform*, XI. On the general shift in the strategic electoral calculus see Skowronek, *Building A New American State*.

[58] Richard L. McCormick, *From Realignment to Reform: Political Change in New York State, 1893-1910* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1981), 104.

[59] For example, *News*, 3 Oct. 1904, 4; *Times*, 15 Oct.1904, 2.

[60] *News*, 16 Oct. 1904, 2, c. 1.

[61] *News*, 16 Oct. 1904, 1.

[62] *News*, 16 Oct. 1904, 2.

[63] Leonard elaborates a much broader picture of the development of this independent and critical investigative reporting which culminates in the Progressive era . He also presents a strong argument for the political consequences of this new cynical journalism. Leonard, *Power of the Press*.

[64] Paul Kleppner, *Change and Continuity in Electoral Politics, 1893-1928* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 170.

[65] *News*, 10 Oct. 1904.

[66] Skowronek, *Building A New American State*, 167-71.

[67] Cf. Kleppner, *Change and Continuity*, 226.

[68] In V. O. Key's famous interpretation, primaries fundamentally weakened the minority party. The smaller party was deprived of its control of the right of opposition, as primaries allowed competition to migrate into the dominant party which possessed all real chances of winning a political office. V. O. Key Jr., “The Direct Primary and Party Structure: A Study of State Legislative Nominations,” *The American Political Science Review* 48 (March 1954).

[69] Cf. Walter D. Burnham, “Voting,” in A. James Reichley (ed.) *Elections American Style* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 1987); Kleppner, *Change and Continuity*.

[70] *News*, 9 Oct. 1904, 13.

[71] In the paper's judgment, “the Municipal League is one of several agencies through which the general public may obtain reliable and unprejudiced information.” *News*, 4 Oct. 1904.

[72] *Times*, 15 Oct. 1904, 8. Other civic groups mentioned are the Independent Voter's Club and the Good Citizen's League. Also cf. the *News*, 15 Oct. 1904, 9.

[73] *News*, 5 Oct. 1904; 4 Oct. 1904, 2.

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[74] See, for example the advertisement of Edwin Denby which cites various newspapers endorsements of him. *Times*, 15 Oct. 1904.

[75] *Times*, 16 Oct. 1904.

[76] Letter, Edmund W. Booth to Henry Booth, dated 13 March 1913 (Cranbrook Archives.)

[77] On the role of parties in rendering clear and comprehensible political programs, political responsibility and hence voter choices see Burnham, "Voting,"102-4, 123-4.

[78] In Richard Jensen's categories, a new candidate merchandising approach superseded the party mobilizing of voters Jensen, "Armies, Admen and Crusaders," 43-5; Burnham, *Current Crisis*, 95-7.

[79] Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 186-98

[80] George Stark, "Schermerhorn of the Times," *Michigan History Magazine* 27 (Summer 1943); Harold Currie, " A Socialist Edits the Detroit Times," *Michigan History Magazine* 52 (Spring 1968); C. David Tompkins, "Profile of a Progressive Editor," *Michigan History Magazine* 53 (Summer 1969.)

[81] On George Booth in general see the biography by Arthur Pound, *The Only Thing Worth Finding: The Life and Legacies of George Gough Booth* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964.)

[82] George G. Booth, "Notes for An Address" (Cranbrook Archives). Booth so seriously believed that a newspaper should be devoted to public service and not to profits or private interests that he argued for public ownership of the press. [Letter, George G. Booth to Edmund W. Booth dated 11 Nov. 1914 (Cranbrook Archives). Furthermore, he repeatedly defined the *News* as a "public institution." In the words of biographer Pound, the *News* was seen as "operating under a tacit franchise from the people..." Pound, *The Only Thing Worth Finding*, 191.

[83] Letter, George G. Booth to Edmund W. Booth dated 30 July 1907 (Cranbrook Archives.) Other documents that sound the theme of public service are: Document entitled "1913" (Cranbrook Archives) by Edmund W. Booth announcing the formation of a philanthropic fund in Grand Rapids. Booth to George G. Booth dated 30 July, 1908. And cf. George G. Booth, "Notes for an Address," 1, 4. (Cranbrook Archives.)

[84] Cf. Letter, George G. Booth to Edmund W. Booth, dated 19 April 1906 (Cranbrook Archives) and cf. Pound, *The Only Thing Worth Finding*, 224-5.

[85] Ibid. and cf. Pound, *The Only Thing Worth Finding*, 234.

[86] Letter, George G. Booth to Edmund W. Booth dated 9 July 1908; Letter, Edmund W. Booth to George G. Booth dated 7 Dec. 1907; Letter, Edmund W. Booth to George G. Booth dated 20 Dec. 1907 (Cranbrook Archives) and Cf. Pound, *The Only Thing Worth Finding*, 217, 235-6, 458-9.

[87] Letter, George G. Booth to Edmund W. Booth dated 30 July 1907 (Cranbrook Archives.)

[88] Cf. Letter, George G. Booth to Edmund W. Booth dated 30 July 1907 (Cranbrook Archives). And cf. Booth, "The Senatorship," (1918) on legitimate newspaper income. (Cranbrook Archives.)

[89] Cf. Gerald Baldasty, "The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Modern American Journalism," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*. V. 100, part 2 (1991).

[90] Letter, George G. Booth to H. Chalmers, dated 7 Nov. 1915 (Cranbrook Archives.)

[91] Gaye Tuchman, " Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," *American Journal of Sociology*, V. 77 (1972); Randall Collins, *The Credential Society* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 136.

[92] Warren Breed, "Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis," *Social Forces*, 33 (May 1955); Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual," 662-3, 667, 669; David Barsamian, *Stenographers to Power*, (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1992), 26-7

[93] Pound, *The Only Thing Worth Finding*, 221.

[94] Cf. Alexander, "The Mass Media," 23-39

[95] Daniel Hallin, *The "Uncensored War"*, 116-9.

[96] Ibid. And see Alexander, "The Mass Media," 29-32, 35-7; Hallin and Mancini, "Speaking of the President," 849.

[97] Samuel Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era, 1908-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 101.

[98] Michael Rogin, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), 197-8.

[99] Hallin and Mancini, "Speaking of the President," 847-9; Alexander, "The Mass Media," 35-7. The press aas impartial and non-partisan had few justifications for pressing its own interpretations and selections against the representations of other competing political powers in the public sphere. The independent press possessed only limited rights of speech--mainly when it asserted that its views represented the public against governmental or private powers. If a reporter's viewpoint stimulated significant social controversy, then it would be condemned as partisan

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Will Irwin Revisited:
A Contrast of Past & Present Criticisms of the Press

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Abstract

Will Irwin's 1911 series on the American press is the definitive critique of the early press. Now as then the media is being looked down upon because of serious lapses in ethical judgment. This study contrasts the criticisms of the press in Irwin's day with those of the present day. While the press has matured over the years and technology has advanced, many of the ethical dilemmas of Irwin's time are the same today. If anything, the dilemmas have become even more complex today. This study suggests that now more than ever, the press must police itself, or face stricter regulation - a consequence Irwin saw as the last, least desirable resort.

Background

When the Commission on the Freedom of the Press presented its report in 1947, it concluded that "freedom of the press was in danger and that the press must police itself to remain free of government control."[1] At that time, the press was being heavily criticized and publishers were concerned that the press would become subject to government restraint.[2]

The definitive critique of the early American press was written by Will Irwin in 1911 and published in *Collier's.* Irwin was assigned to write the series when certain inconsistencies were noticed in the American press. As Irwin explained, "The muckrakers had noticed that in cities where gangs of machine politicians were stealing the shingles off City Hall, often the local newspapers kept silence until some magazine writer... came from outside to unsheathe his rake."[3]

The American media faces intense criticisms again today. Stephen Budiansky of *U.S. News and World Report* calls it an "unprecedented public hostility toward the national media." "The public these days does not merely dislike the press," says Budiansky, "it hates it."[4] A study conducted by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press found that while people tend to trust television news, they believe it is one-sided and unfair. In addition they found "alarming levels of public support for government restrictions."[5]

In this anti-media atmosphere, it seems appropriate then to reexamine Will Irwin's series on the American press. My purpose in this work is to contrast Irwin's criticisms of the early press with the criticisms of the media today.

The American Newspaper

When Irwin was assigned to write the *American Newspaper* series, he was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task. Irwin discovered that there was little background material to work with. But it didn't take long for Irwin to accumulate what he called "a drawerful of proved instances." In retrospect, Irwin concluded that the majority of American papers of his day were sound and honest, but a minority were, as he put it, "out for the stuff." Those, Irwin thought, had the potential to endanger the structure of American journalism.[6]

As Irwin put it:

> ...the American press has a kind of franchise from the American people and the American government. We had the freest press in the world. Tacitly, it was supposed to pay for this privilege by 'guarding our liberties'... when that process seemed necessary.[7]

If laws were passed to regulate those of the media who stray, Irwin believed, "the grafters and the 'interests,' rather than the injured private citizen in private life would be the first to take advantage of them."[8]

Interestingly, while working on the series, Irwin himself was approached by a newspaperman who let it be known that his boss might pay as much as $5000 if he wrote a story on him and dropped the newspaper series.[9]

Irwin's Criticisms of the Press

Irwin's series entitled *The American Newspaper* was published in 15 parts spread over a period of six months. His criticisms of the early press can be condensed, however, into six main themes. The news was filled with the opinion and rumor. The press leaned toward sensationalism over substance and sometimes used deceptive techniques to make a story seem bigger. Reporters invaded the privacy of individuals to get a story. The financial burdens of the press gave advertisers undue influence over the policies and contents of the press. There were often internal conflicts of interest involving newspaper owners or editors and their financial interests.

No man can help but put some amount of his opinion into his work, wrote Irwin. But, he said, the newspapers of the day were giving in to that tendency. "Newspapers good and bad, honest and venal, have come more and more to put their views into their news columns, to relate news from a basis of opinion."[10] He criticized the *New York Journal* , for instance, for routinely seizing upon every rumor at the scene of an incident and reporting it as fact.[11]

Reporting on public affairs became less popular, while gossip about public figures increased. "The debate on the McKinley tariff drew four or five columns," said a Washington correspondent, "but if Taft puts on a sweater and walks around the Washington Monument, that's worth a half-column."[12]

There is a conflict that faces every editor. Is the paper a business or a profession? Irwin called this dichotomy the "great contradiction."[13] The editor has the power to choose whether to print stories serving the intellectual needs of the readers (what they need) or to give the public "the latest picturesque murder" (what will sell).[14]

Irwin criticized the press for preferring sensationalism over substance. In one example, a man in a small crowd of relatives, waiting to be allowed in to the police morgue, shook his fist and expressed his impatience. Shortly after, the doors were opened and the crowd filed inside in an orderly fashion. The headlines read "Riot at Morgue!! - Frantic Mob Charges Police!!"[15]

Sensationalism isn't so much the story itself, but how the story is packaged. An editor for one of Pulitzer's papers explained his formula:

> "Suppose it's Halley's comet," he says. "Well first you have a half-page of decoration showing the comet, with historical pictures of previous appearances thrown in. If you can work a pretty girl into the decoration, so much the better. If not, get some good nightmare idea like the inhabitants of Mars watching it pass. Then you want a page of big-type heads - snappy. Then four inches of story, written right off the bat. Then a picture of Professor Halley down here and another of Professor Lowell up there, and a two-column boxed freak containing a scientific opinion, which nobody will understand, just to give it class."[16]

Other practices Irwin condemned included the practice of posing models for photographs, the use of stock photos in place of actual pictures of murder or suicide victims, and the use of trick headlines - shouting out a sensational story in three-inch type while the truth is buried in the small print.[17]

Irwin believed reporters went too far in invading the privacy of individuals to get a story. He felt the libel laws were a part of the problem. Those wronged he said, "fear not only the appearance in court, but also the raking over of their private affairs, the resurrection of their family skeletons, by which the yellow journal often responds to a libel suit."[18]

Irwin devoted more space to the discussion of advertiser influence over the press than to any of the other problems he addressed. His articles recounted example after example of news being suppressed because of advertisers. Standard Oil silenced negative publicity by purchasing 18 months of advertising in every Ohio paper writing against them.[19] It was well-known in New York's theatre district that $1000 would buy a full page ad and a glowing editorial about a show in the *New York Journal*..[20] The salesmen of certain papers went so far as to use a form of blackmail Irwin wrote. "You advertise with us and we'll leave you alone."[21] Some papers had "keep out" books - lists of clients to keep out of the news.[22]

Irwin called the publishers of American newspapers the "foe from within." Whether a publisher bought a newspaper with other earnings or started himself, he had ties to big business. This could be a railroad or other investment from which he made his money, or the bank from which he borrowed it. Wherever the publisher got his money, Irwin said, these arms of business held influence over him.[23]

Publishers with social ambitions kept an "A" list and a "B" list. The "A" list included the "friends of the paper" - to be treated kindly in print. The "B" list, usually shorter, were those who had offended the publisher - to be raked over the coals when the opportunity was ripe.[24]

Irwin was reluctant to name names in this portion of the series for fear of libel. But he claimed that certain papers were secretly owned by politicians, some rural papers were being subsidized by a railroad, and that a bank in Omaha was successfully suppressing particular stories at a certain paper.[25]

A Code of Ethics and A New Generation

Irwin espoused a code of ethics for reporters. He believed that in the long run it would serve the self-interest of a paper for its reporters to follow some ethical guidelines. "A violated home is a hostile home," wrote Irwin, "and certain journals owe their special facilities for news-getting to the decency and acceptability of their reporters." Here are his guidelines:

> 1. Never without special permission, print information which you learn at your friend's house or in your club. In short, draw a strict line between your social and professional life.
>
> 2. Except in the case of criminals, publish nothing without the full permission of your informant. The caution, "But this is not for publication" stands between every experienced reporter and a world of live sensational matter.
>
> 3. Never sail under false colors. State who you are, what newspaper you represent, and whether or not your informant is talking for the publication. If there is keyhole work to be done leave that for the detectives who work inside the law.
>
> 4. Keep this side of the home boundary.[26] (Be considerate of the family members of your news subjects)

Irwin was opposed to government regulation of the press. He believed regulation would benefit the abusers over the public.[27] "Law is the last resort of society," writes Irwin, "the ultimate social corrective when all others have failed."[28] Instead he believed that the ills of the American press would be cured as a newer, younger generation of journalists took over the reigns. He ended his series by saying:

> To us of this younger generation, our daily press is speaking, for the most part, with a dead voice, because the supreme power rests in men of that older generation. Could the working journalists of our own age tell us as frankly as they wished what they think and see and feel about the times, we should have only minor points to criticize in American journalism.[29]

The Press Today

Other generations have come and gone since Irwin's writings. So how do his criticisms of the early press compare with the criticisms of modern media? There still seems to be an emphasis on the sensational. Accusations of bias are still heard today. And with many media outlets operating in the red, some news editors are being forced to buckle under to advertiser pressure. The media today is faced with ethical questions that weren't possible in 1911. We have digitally altered photographs and staged video footage. Television reporters make up stories live via satellite so producers can have a fresh angle on a story - even if nothing is happening.[30] And now, perhaps even more than in Irwin's day, the press is faced with difficult conflict of interest problems from within. To illustrate these points, here are some modern examples befitting of Irwin's early criticisms.

Opinion and Gossip

In a recent article in *U.S. News and World Report,* Stephen Budiansky criticized the press for what he called "edge." As he defined it, this so-called "edge" is the art of the cheap shot. According to Budiansky, reporters are too often "inserting themselves into the story," offering "gratuitous opinion." "Edge" manifests itself in "the smirk at the end of a stand-up," in the reporter's non-question question, and in the cynical slant of a story.[31] An example that comes quickly to mind is the way Peter Jennings compared the American voters in the last election to "unruly two and three-year-olds."

A classic case of reporting rumors occurred during the Branch Davidian standoff in Waco, Texas. Journalists there found themselves frustrated daily by a lack of information. According to a task force report by the Society of Professional Journalists, this led to a tendency to "report speculation and innuendo, even to base news stories on interviews with other journalists rather than with principals."[32] Journalists interviewed by the task force agreed that the reporting of rumors was widespread among the press corps. One reporter is said to have announced the end of the standoff because he had seen FBI agents leave Waco for Austin. An FBI agent complained that some reporters "just made stuff up."[33]

A similar situation took place during the prison riot in Lucasville, Ohio. For example, the Akron *Beacon-Journal* ran a front page story based on an unconfirmed tip, that a guard killed by inmates had had his eyes gouged out, his tongue cut off and that his arms, legs and back had been broken. The story was denied by the director of the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, but the paper did not print a correction until two months later.[34]

Rumors about the body count ran rampant. One paper reported 19 dead, another estimated as many as 150, while a television station put the number at 172. The woman who came up with the number 172 had overheard a conversation between two prison guards. What she thought was a body count turned out to be a head count, but the station never ran a correction.[35]

The media coverage of the Lucasville siege interfered with the authorities' ability to resolve the situation. Inmates who heard reports of bodies "stacked up like cordwood" and guards being mutilated believed that these false reports had been planted by the state to make them look bad.[36]

Sensationalism

A survey conducted by the Times Mirror Center for the People & the Press claims that only 35 percent of those surveyed who were 35 and under had read a newspaper the day before the survey. Only 41 percent in that survey had watched a television newscast the day before.[37] And yet, another poll suggested that over three-quarters of the American public followed the news of O.J. Simpson's arrest.[38]

Coverage of the O.J. Simpson case began when sources "close to the investigation" leaked information to the press about Simpson's impending arrest. As the the scenario began to play out on television, CNN defended the media's decision to run the story. During the program *CNN and Company*, law professor Susan Estrich made the point that, "the presumption of innocence becomes a sort of joke when you're tried and convicted on local television before you've ever been arrested." But CNN host Mary Tillotson defended the press, saying that the media tries to "feed people what they're interested in." The shows's participants concluded at program's end that it is the law enforcement agency's responsibility to keep information (such as Simpson's impending arrest) from reaching the media before the proper time.[39]

Last year Chris Wallace of "PrimeTime Live" approached West Virginia's Senator Byrd outside his home to ask him about pork barrel spending. Byrd's staff had consistently told Wallace that the Senator would not grant an interview. The day after the incident, Byrd complained on the Senate floor that he couldn't even "walk his little dog" in peace. Washington Post media writer criticized Wallace's decision to go to Byrd's home:

> Chris Wallace told me in an interview that over the course of a week he was told that Senator Byrd would not give an interview...I think this kind of ambush interview gives all of us in the business a bad name... The whole point... was to get some dramatic footage of the subject fleeing while the courageous reporter shouts questions at him.[40]

A common form of modern sensationalism is negativism. As journalists, we are taught to seek stories with an element of conflict. But it is being said today that modern political coverage must be negative. A network producer reportedly told his reporters to write stories with "villains." "You cannot be positive today," says Marvin Kalb, a former NBC reporter now at Harvard's Shorenstein Center on Press, Politics, and Public Policy, "You cannot even give a public official the benefit of the doubt."[41]

In an opinion piece appearing in *The New York Times*, Kalb criticized media coverage of President Clinton's State of the Union Address. While public opinion polls showed that Clinton's message was a success, the media declared it a "stunning flop." Most commentators, according to Kalb, critiqued style over substance - complaining that the speech was too long and poorly organized without discussing its content. Kalb speculated that perhaps reporters assume the public is already well-informed about the issues and is more interested in "insider tidbits."[42]

A study of health care reform coverage in the major national publications conducted by Kathleen Hall Jamieson confirmed some of Kalb's suspicions. Jamieson found that the publications assumed readers were familiar with the issues already, and focused instead on the politics of the reform proposals. Jamieson also found that quotes used in health care stories invariably attacked someone or some position and that readers of the stories tended to be more cynical toward government than those who had not.[43]

Last year's conference of Investigative Reporters and Editors was highlighted by a panel discussion that included the journalists who led the coverage of the Bobbitt case, Paula Jones' sexual harassment accusations, the Harding / Kerrigan incident and the child molestation charges against Michael Jackson. The journalists conceded that it was hard not to get caught up in their respective stories. Peter Bhatia, who covered the Harding / Kerrigan incident admitted it was "as much fun as I've ever had with any story."[44]

But some of the others illustrated how sensational stories could be done seriously. Denise Watson, who covered the Bobbitt case for the Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot* and *Ledger-Star* used the case as a news peg to discuss the delays in the legal system that are commonplace in Virginia in cases of marital rape. But by the time of the second trial, she said, the case had turned into a comedy of low humor in which Watson found it to be difficult to retain a serious edge.[45]

Mark Fitzgerald, who wrote up the proceedings of the conference for *Editor & Publisher* pointed out that journalists often seek high-minded rationale for this type of reporting. A local reporter from a Texas station brought along a tape shot from a hidden camera of a doctor performing oral sex on an unwilling male patient. The report that aired was complete with "grabby graphics and mood music" with the title "Doctor's Orders." According to Fitzgerald, the reporter defended the piece by saying it "was not really about the opportunity to air an act of fellatio... It was really about the failure of the Texas board of medical examiners to stop a sexually abusive physician." A voice from the back of the room shouted "This isn't investigative reporting. It's crap." Before the discussion broke up a white Ford Bronco began its famed voyage down a Los Angeles freeway.[46]

Deception

A keynote speaker at a National Press Photographers Association conference was a woman who goes by the name Raphaele. She demonstrated to the photographers the capabilities of digital photography. She showed how she could work with a photograph to "move, replace, combine delete, augment, skew to a correct or desired perspective, color or recolor and overlay" portions of a picture. The results were so good, the photographers were concerned about how these techniques would effect the credibility of photography. This was six years ago.[47]

Since that time there have been a rash of staged or altered photos that have come to light. One of the best known is *New York Newsday's* contrived cover photo that appeared as if Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan shared the ice in skating practice. The caption said the two "appeared to skate together in this New York Newsday composite illustration."[48] *Newsday's* editor defended the cover, saying it was clearly marked as a composite photo. But the media critics disagree. Stephen D. Isaacs of the Colombia University School of Journalism called the picture "the ultimate journalistic sin."[49]

> "The newspaper business - and television when it does its job right - is about the pursuit of the truth," Mr. Isaacs said. "A composite photograph is not the truth. It is a lie and, therefore, a great danger to the standards and integrity of what we do."[50]

It is interesting to note that on the same day the Kerrigan / Harding photo appeared on the cover of Newsday, a stock photo company filed suit against the paper claiming it had scanned two of its photos into a computer and manipulated them to form a new computer-generated "derivative" photo which was used on a prior cover of Newsday.[51]

The media has also been caught staging photos and video. On November 17, 1992, NBC aired a report on the safety of certain General Motors trucks. The report included a crash test in which the viewers saw a car hitting the side of a parked GM truck, which then burst into flames. It was later revealed that small explosives had been planted on the truck "to ensure that a fire would erupt if gasoline leaked from the truck." GM filed a defamation suit against NBC which was eventually settled out of court.[52]

Following this controversy, a survey showed a drop in credibility for NBC. A study showed that NBC's news was rated less credible by respondents than CBS, ABC and CNN.[53] On an ironic note, the safety defects the reporters were attempting to illustrate eventually proved to be real.[54]

Around the same time NBC was settling its lawsuit with GM, another network was caught in an embarrassing moment. ABC's Cokie Roberts claimed to be reporting "live from Capitol Hill" when she was in fact in a studio in front of a backdrop. According to J. Max Robins, who first reported the incident in *Variety*, the network wanted Roberts to go to Capitol Hill to talk with Peter Jennings live about reaction to the President's State of the Union Address. But Roberts didn't have time to make the trip, so she put an overcoat over her evening gown and stood in front of the backdrop. Afterwards, according to a network spokesperson, both Roberts and executive producer Rick Kaplan "regretted it and realized it was a stupid thing to have done."[55]

In another incident, a *Los Angeles Times* photographer was suspended for a week for staging a photograph.[56] During the fires in Southern California, photographer Mike Meadows apparently suggested to a fireman that he pose by a swimming pool and splash water over his head. His editor told *The Washington Post* that this would normally be a firing offense, but that Meadows was being treated compassionately because he had risked his life for others during the L.A. riots.[57]

Invasion of Privacy

Ever since Miami *Herald* reporters waited outside of a Washington townhouse to capture the affair of then presidential candidate Gary Hart, the boundaries of reporting on public figures has all but vanished. Reporters from the *Herald* had staked out the townhouse on a tip that Hart would spend the weekend there with another woman. Hendrick Hertzberg in writing for *The New Republic* called the incident a "gross violation of privacy." But Hertzberg also noted that by its actions the Herald "deliberately opened a sluice gate that will not be easy to close."[58]

A study by Bruce Garrison and Sigman Splichal attempts to quantify current journalistic attitudes towards these types of invasion of privacy. The researchers found in a survey of 283 newspapers, that slightly over a fourth of the papers had a formal policy dealing with the disclosure of private information about public figures. Only 11 percent had that policy in writing. A majority said they would be "somewhat" or "very likely" to report on a candidate's personal illness, crime record, abortion, or drug treatment. Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) said newspapers should cover the extra-marital affairs of public figures.[59]

Naturally I would be remiss if I failed to at least mention the press' latest major example of invasion of privacy. Journalists are still debating the ethics of Connie Chung's reporting of a certain comment made by Newt Gingrich's mother. SPJ's *Quill* magazine reports that the general consensus so far is that Kathleen Gingrich was set up when Chung said her remarks would be "just between you and me."[60] Will Irwin would probably agree.

Control of Advertisers

Examples of advertiser influence are harder to find. This topic was among those covered in a study conducted by Joseph Turow of the Annenberg School for Communications. Turow conducted in-depth interviews with a group of newspaper writers along with employees of Time. The interviews focused on coverage of conflict of interest issues within the subjects respective organizations. The journalists interviewed said it would be difficult for them to get editorial permission to write in-depth stories on advertiser relationships. They said the stories might result in embarrassing revelations that might disturb financial relationships and cut off important sources of revenue. The journalists said they would fear for their jobs if they proposed this type of story.[61]

This seems an appropriate place to cite an example of an advertiser using the media for free publicity. It was a legitimate ad done in very bad taste. Following all the hoopla surrounding the Tonya Harding / Nancy Kerrigan incident, a company placed an ad for a metal collapsible baton like the one used in the Kerrigan attack and called it the "Tonya Tapper." The ad ran in the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* prompting phone calls from readers who felt the ad was in bad taste. A newspaper official said the paper put serious thought into the decision to accept the ad but "one of our overriding principles," he said, "is that we will always accept ads for any product or service that is legal." For the $1000 price of the ad, the makers of the "Tonya Tapper" received nationwide publicity from news shows and radio programs.[62]

Conflict of Interest

It is ironic that one of the organizations which helped fund the Commission on the Freedom of the Press would be one of the best modern examples of conflict of interest. *Time* magazine has been under fire consistently ever since its parent company acquired Warner Communications in

1989. In their latest issue, rival *U.S. News and World Report* called Time-Warner "the leading cultural polluter." And it raises a valid point. How does a publication like *Time* retain any type of respectability when it's parent company produces such things as the "Jenny Jones Show," Madonna's sex book, and markets bands like 2 Live Crew, Ice-T and Metallica?[63] But this is minor compared to Time - Warner's internal problems.

According to Gerald Levin, vice-chairman of Time Inc., the acquisition of Warner was done because of financial concerns. According to Levin, Time's breakup value at the time was double the price of its shares, and executives were worried that Time might fall prey to a hostile takeover. After negotiations with several other companies, a stock for stock merger of Time Inc. and Warner Communications was announced in March of 1989. Henry R. Luce's "journalistic enterprise... operated for the public interest" was now "an entertainment oriented communications company."[64]

Early in 1990 Connie Bruck wrote a piece for *The New Yorker* chronicling the merger of Time and Warner. Bruck made the following observation:

> Many at *Time* believe that (editor-in-chief Jason) McManus... was so caught up in the business side of the deal that he lost his journalistic perspective. Throughout the subsequent months of (the Paramount court) battle, McManus continued in his dual role of a board member and the person ultimately in charge of what was printed in Time about the deal. Unsurprisingly, the stories - in *Fortune* as well as in *Time* - were pro-Time Inc..[65]

The Turow study referred to earlier included a number of journalists and executives working for *Time*. While Warner products received positive press from Time - Warner publications, the writers maintain that they wrote those reviews with unbiased judgment. But, remarked Turow, they were at odds to explain why it was never mentioned in the reviews that these were Warner products.[66]

In one interview, a writer volunteered to Turow that the selection of Ted Turner as *Time's* 1991 Man of the Year was related to business interests. Time-Warner owned 30 percent of Turner Broadcasting at the time and this type of coverage was considered advertising for a Time-Warner affiliate. Time - Warner's annual report indicated an intention to "work jointly and strategically" with Turner Broadcasting.[67]

In the two years following the merger, Time-Warner lost $326 million.[68] Staff cutbacks were made and those left behind were apparently feeling insecure about their jobs. Finally, a decision was made to make the Time Inc. Magazine unit the platform for attracting international support for the firms other ventures. While the writers interviewed by Turow denied any wrongdoing, they did state their belief that many of their colleagues had sacrificed journalistic principles to preserve their jobs.[69]

One journalist who participated in Turow's study made the observation,

> Time Warner is a very big company. It owns everything. So everything is a conflict of interest... But the people who run it understand that we're trying to be journalists, and they may also realize that we have very little impact.[70]

Another area of ethical concern is the fees professional journalists receive from giving speeches to organizations they cover. News organizations encourage this practice because it serves as a form of self-promotion. *Newsweek* , for instance, pays its reporters bonuses for giving speeches and appearing on talk-shows.[71]

To cite an example, Sam Donaldson said he saw no conflict of interest in receiving a $30,000 fee for speaking to an insurance industry group shortly before he co-anchored a program criticizing the industry for trying to influence congressional aides. Donaldson said he didn't know at the time that he'd be doing the program. After the program, a representative of the insurance group said he objected to being abused by someone who took $30,000 "and ran with it."[72]

Cokie Roberts routinely covers health-care issues and received a $20,000 fee for speaking to the Group Health Association of America. When confronted about the possible conflict of interest, she decided to donated the fee to a medical facility named after her sister.[73]

There is one additional case of conflict worth a brief mention. A reporter was fired from WXIA Atlanta after it was learned that he had signed an agreement for a made-for-TV movie based on an ongoing story he was working.[74]

The Majority and Public Perception

It doesn't really matter if these practices are carried out by the majority. What does matter is the public's perception of the press. Ellen Hume, a senior fellow at the Annenberg Washington Program, criticized some of the media's questionable practices in a *New York Times* article. "If you do this sort of thing more and more," said Hume, "you lose the moral authority that said you were different from those people who don't care about verified facts."[75]

And it appears the public is losing faith in the media. A 1994 Freedom Forum survey indicated that 71 percent of Americans believe the country is not governed by popular will but by "a handful of politicians, journalists and businesses" and 72 percent feel the media is more interested in scandal than the issues. Or as one writer interpreted it, government is what the press says it is, and it is out of the hands of the American people.[76] But the public apparently doesn't trust those who they believe to be in control. A Gallup poll conducted last fall indicated that only 21 percent of Americans believe the media is "very or mostly honest." This same survey also showed a high level of distrust for both the President and Congress.[77]

This atmosphere of distrust is leading to threats of regulation. The U.S. Department this year declared discipline records on college campuses a part of a student's academic record. This makes information on campus crime and discipline off-limits to the press.[78] A portion of the much-debated crime bill has closed driver's license and motor vehicle records to the press.[79] Other challenges are on the horizon.

Conclusions

A Free and Responsible Press, the final report by the Commission on Freedom of the Press, was supposed to serve as a guideline for the press to regulate itself. Media, said the commission, "must control themselves, or be controlled by the government."[80] But as we have seen, the press is being criticized for doing some of the same types of things today as it did before the commission was formed. The press is not under so much outright corruption today as it was in Irwin's time, but instead finds itself caught in embarrassing and often complicated ethical dilemmas which lead to public distrust.

The commission concluded that, "the press itself should assume the responsibility of providing the variety, quantity, and quality of information and discussion which the country needs."[81] Or as Irwin said simply, "What we need is not more class publications, but more sane and honest newspapers... which tell the truth in the language of the people."[82]

Notes

[1] The Commission on Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 1.

[2] J. Herbert Altschull, *Agents of Power,* 2nd. ed., (New York: Longman, 1995), 137-138.

[3] Will Irwin, *The Making of a Reporter,* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), 164.

[4] Stephen Budiansky, "The Media's Message," *U.S. News and World Report,* 9 January 1995, 45.

[5] Stanley Meisler, "Trust in Media High, but Curbs Favored, Poll Finds,"*Los Angeles Times*, 16 March 1995, 1(A).

[6] Will Irwin, *The Making of a Reporter,* 164-168.

[7] Ibid., 166.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 167.

[10] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: I.- The Power of the Press," Collier's, 21 January 1911, 18.

[11] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: III.- The Fourth Current," Collier's, 18 February 1911, 18.

[12] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: IV.- The Spread and Decline of Yellow Journalism," Collier's, 4 March 1911, 18.

[13] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: I," 17.

[14] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: VI.- The Editor and the News," Collier's, 1 April 1911, 18.

[15] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: III.," 24.

[16] Ibid., 16.

[17] Ibid., 15 - 17.

[18] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: VIII.- All the News That's Fit to Print," Collier's, 6 May 1911, 18.

[19] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: XI.- Our Kind of People," Collier's, 17 June 1911, 19.

[20] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: X.- The Unhealthy Alliance," Collier's, 3 June 1911, 23.

[21] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: III.," 14.

[22] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: IX.- The Advertising Influence," Collier's, 27 May 1911, 23.

[23] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: XII.- The Foe From Within," Collier's, 1 July 1911, 17.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 18.

[26] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: VIII.," 19, 30.

[27] Will Irwin, *The Making of a Reporter*, 166.

[28] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: XV.- The Voice of a Generation," Collier's, 29 July 1911, 15.

[29] Ibid., 25.

[30] Rebecca J. Tallent and J. Steven Smethers, "Feeding the Beast," Quill, November / December 1993, 21.

[31] Stephen Budiansky, "The Media's Message," 45 - 46.

[32] Jay Black and Bob Steele, "Beyond Waco: Reflections and Guidelines," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 8 (1993): 243.

[33] Rebecca J. Tallent and J. Steven Smethers, "Feeding the Beast," 21.

[34] Bruce Porter, "The Lucasville Follies," *Colombia Journalism Review,* May / June 1994, 40.

[35] Ibid., 40 - 41.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ann Marie Kerwin, "Newspapers' glass - half full or half-empty?," *Editor & Publisher,* 12 January 1991, 18.

[38] "More than 75% of the public following the O.J. coverage," *Editor & Publisher,* 30 July 1994, 17.

[39] Mary Tillotson, "O.J. Simpson - Trial by Leak?," *CNN & Company*, 14 June 1994, Broadcast News, Transcript #940018706.

[40] Bernard Kalb, "Ambush Journalism - Can the Media Go Too Far?," *Reliable Sources* , CNN, 6 March 1994, Broadcast News, Transcript #940007449.

[41] Stephen Budiansky, "The Media's Message," 46.

[42] Marvin Kalb, "The State of the Disunion," *The New York Times,* 4 February 1995, 19(D).

[43] Kathleen Hall Jamieson and J. Cappella, "Do Health Care Reform Polls Clarify or Confuse the Public?," *Journal of American Health Policy,* 4 no. 3 (May / June 1994): 38-41.

[44] Mark Fitzgerald, "Legitimate News Stories Or Crap?," *Editor & Publisher,* 2 July 1994, 50.

[45] Ibid., 50 - 51.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Jim Rosenberg, "Visual Enhancement of Photos," *Editor & Publisher,* 25 March 1989, 46.

[48] "Fire on Ice," *New York Newsday,* 16 February, 1994, cover.

[49] William Glaberson, "Newsday Imagines an Event, and Sets Off a Debate," *New York Times,* 17 February 1994, 22(D).

[50] Ibid.

[51] George Garneau, "Lawsuit Alleges 'Photographic Piracy'," *Editor & Publisher,* 26 February 1994, 8.

[52] Michael Parrish and Donald W. Nauss, "NBC Admits It Rigged Crash, Settles GM Suit," *Los Angeles Times,* 10 February 1993, 1(A).

[53] Joe Mandese, "Credibility Gap for Network News," *Advertising Age,* 8 March 1993, 8.

[54] "GM Sues to Block Recall of Pickup Truck," *Boston Globe,* 18 November 1994, 72.

[55] J. Max Robins, "It 'World News' or is it Memorex?," *Variety,* 14 February 1994, 68.

[56] M.L.Stein, "Suspended," *Editor & Publisher,* 12 February 1994, 23.

[57] Michael Lewis, "Lights! Camera! News!," *The New Republic,* 28 February 1994, 11.

[58] Hendrick Hertzberg, "Sluicegate," *The New Republic,* 1 June 1987, 12.

[59] Bruce Garrison and Sigman Splichal, "Reporting on Private Affairs of Candidates: A Study of Newspaper Practices," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics,* 9 (Fall 1994): 173 - 175.

[60] Deborah Hurley, "The whisper heard 'round the world," *Quill,* March 1995, 13.

[61] Joseph Turow, "Hidden Conflicts and Journalistic Norms: The Case of Self-Coverage," *Journal of Communication,* 44 no. 2 (Spring 1994): 35.

[62] Dorothy Diobbe, "'Tonya Tapper' Ad Creates A Stir," *Editor & Publisher,* 26 February 1994, 11.

[63] John Leo, "The leading cultural polluter," *U.S. News & World Report,* 27 March 1995, 16.

[64] Connie Bruck, "Deal of the Year," *The New Yorker,* 8 January 1990, 66-75.

[65] Ibid., 83.

[66] Joseph Turow, "Hidden Conflicts and Journalistic Norms," 39 - 42.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Roger Cohen, "Steve Ross Defends His Paycheck," *New York Times Magazine,* 22 March 1992, 30.

[69] Joseph Turow, "Hidden Conflicts and Journalistic Norms," 40 - 46.

[70] Ibid., 41.

[71] James M. Perry, "Lucrative Lecture Circuit Lures Many Journalists In Washington but Also Raises Conflict Issues," *Wall Street Journal*, 15 April 1994, 10(A).

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Jim Auchmutey, "Unscripted Departure," *Quill*, November 1993, 15.

[75] William Glaberson, "Newsday Imagines an Event," 22(D).

[76] Jay Rosen, "The Press Neglects Its Civic Role," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 October 1994, 7(M).

[77] Gerald F. Seib, "Confidence Gap: Press Trapped in Own Cynicism," *Wall Street Journal*, 31 August 1994, 14(A).

[78] Lucy Dalgish, "College students shouldn't be exempt from real world," *Quill*, April 1995, 14.

[79] Steve Deimann, "Fight begins to keep DMV records open," *Quill*, April 1995, 16.

[80] The Commission on Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press*, 5.

[81] Ibid., 92.

[82] Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper: XV," 16.

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RETURNING GOVERNMENT TO THE HANDS OF THE PEOPLE: THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST'S NONPARTISAN LEAGUE NEWSPAPERS

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RETURNING GOVERNMENT TO THE HANDS OF THE PEOPLE: THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST'S NONPARTISAN LEAGUE NEWSPAPERS

"When God created man, did he command him to be a lawyer, doctor or merchant? No, he commanded him to till the soil, to be a farmer. He did not say: `Go multiply, so you may levy taxes to build up fine cities and costly court houses, to rule in legislative halls with mouth and hands ever open, asking and grasping for higher salaries at the expense of the farmer.' No!"[1]

During the middle of the night of April 26, 1918, an angry mob entered a hotel in Winlock, Wash. Alfred Knutson, the state manager of the Nonpartisan League--a farm protest movement--was dragged from his bed and forced into the street. The mob, which believed the League was socialistic and pro-German, tore off Knutson's clothes, tarred him, and, lacking feathers, covered him in cotton. Three nights later two more men affiliated with the League--Joseph O. Golden and W. R. Edwards--received similar treatment in Washington. Both men identified members of the mobs to the police, but officials did nothing.[2]

Knutson and his tarred colleagues demonstrate an often-ignored fact concerning farm protest movements: most did not have spontaneous, "grass roots" origins as folklore and many historians claim.[3] Instead, these movements were often centrally-run, boasting national headquarters which used newspapers, organizers, and speakers to promote their platforms. Although farmers had a host of long-standing economic and political grievances, they did not so much join agrarian movements as they were recruited.[4]

The Nonpartisan League, which flourished from 1915 to 1923, exemplifies the role newspapers played in agrarian insurgency movements. NPL organizers established a network of newspapers, a news service, lecturers, writers, and political cartoonists to promote and defend their cause--returning government to the hands of the people.[5] Newspapers were important for promoting the group's propaganda, particularly during World War I since the draft caused a shortage of men who could serve as speakers.[6] The newspapers were edited by journalists hired by the League and not by farmers. Therefore, although the newspapers presented issues of concern to farmers, the articles did not represent grass roots discontent, per se. Instead, the publications were mouthpieces for the organization's propaganda. When farmers were heard from in League newspapers, it was via letters to the editor.[7]

The League also needed these newspapers to defend itself against war hysteria and red scare propaganda. Many business leaders and newspapers branded the organization socialistic, pro-German, pro-I.W.W., or Bolshevist. The League's goals of government ownership of utilities, transportation, food storage, and production facilities fueled the claims.

The NPL established its national publication, *The Nonpartisan Leader*, in September 1915 in its home state of North Dakota within months of the organization's founding. During the fall of 1916, the year that the League swept to political victory in North Dakota, members established the Nonpartisan Publishing Company. This organization purchased and ran more than 100 League newspapers, mainly country weeklies. It also distributed national and regional League news to its newspapers. Some farmers also began League newspapers of their own, raising the money through stock companies.[8]

This research examines how the League's newspapers in the Pacific Northwest promoted the NPL's reform agenda. The League's Northwest publications were chosen for several reasons. First, much of the research on the Nonpartisan League has focused on the two states in which the organization had its greatest political success--North Dakota and Minnesota.

Much less has been written about the League in the other states. Yet, seven official League newspapers and one farmer-labor paper regularly supported League activities in the Northwest. These were: the *Idaho Nonpartisan Leader* in Boise, the *Nonpartisan Journal* of Filer, Idaho, the *Montana Nonpartisan* located in Great Falls then Billings, *The Producers News* of Plentywood, Mont., and four Seattle-based newspapers, *The Commonwealth, The Herald*, *The Nonpartisan*, and *The Seattle Union Record*. The latter was the farmer-labor paper. Because of its strong League coverage, the newspaper is included.[9]

The research also is important in the broader context of understanding the role of newspapers in agrarian reform movements. As media historian Jean Folkerts has noted, reform publications are largely understudied.[10] Yet, newspapers have been central to every agrarian movement since the Grangers.

Folkerts's study of Farmers' Alliance newspapers revealed that the agrarian reform press had three functions: "it provided information that mainstream newspapers either neglected or chose to ignore; it formed the core of a communication network that helped Alliance men and women to develop a sense of community; and it presented the Alliance movement as a legitimate effort to oppose the dominant political and economic structure."[11]

The NPL's Northwest newspapers performed much of the same functions. The League's newspapers served as rallying points for farmers who realized the nation's political and economic power had shifted away from them to corporate boardrooms instead. Readers were told that unity would force government to be responsive to farmers' and labors' needs.

THE NONPARTISAN LEAGUE AND THE NORTHWEST

Between 1915 to 1922, the Nonpartisan League claimed several hundred thousand members in thirteen states and two Canadian provinces, beginning in North Dakota then spreading to Minnesota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, Wisconsin, Iowa, Oklahoma, Texas, Alberta, and Saskatchewan.[12] The League captured seats in numerous state legislatures, League-endorsed governors and state Supreme Court justices were elected, and several states sent League-sponsored candidates to Congress. By 1919, Montana had 20,000 NPL members--the fourth largest League state, right behind North Dakota (40,000), Minnesota (50,000), and South Dakota (25,000). Idaho, by contrast, had 12,000 members and Washington, 10,000.[13] NPL activity was minimal in Oregon. League historian Robert Morlan notes that Oregon's State Grange and the Farmers' Union of Oregon both requested League organizers. The League's resources and manpower were stretched too thin, however. In 1921 Oregon's farmers organized a state chapter, but the League's influence was waning both nationally and in the Northwest. As a result, the state chapter's strength was minimal.[14]

The League came about at a time when Northwesterners, and indeed much of the country, were not ready for the League's reform platform. The organization was friendly toward labor (although it never aligned itself with the I.W.W.),[15] which made many Northwesterners uneasy, and others outright hostile, to the League. The region had seen bloody labor unrest in mining and lumber camps since the 1890s. Northwesterners also were suspicious of what they perceived were the League's socialistic goals. The NPL sought to eliminate middlemen as a means of guaranteeing a fair return on crop prices. It also sought state inspection of grain and state ownership of grain elevators, flour mills, packing houses, and cold-storage plants, a tax exemption for farm improvements, rural credit banks operated at cost, and state (rather than private) hail insurance.

Farmers, particularly in the west, sought these changes because they faced steep indebtedness and high taxes. They claimed their grain was unfairly graded at privately-owned elevators and that railroad shipping fees were too high.[16] The charges were not new. Farmers, through local granges, had voiced similar concerns since the Granger movement.[17] Farmers at a grange meeting in Goldendale, Wash., for example, declared in July 1916: "Many of our present laws are unfair to the farmer, confiscating his money and ignoring his rights to individual government. . . The power to make unfair laws is made possible by the lack of farmers' representation in our legislature. The farmers pay a large part of the taxes. They should be represented in our legislature in like proportion."[18]

Many citizens did not agree, however.[19] Verbal and physical attacks against the League and its members increased proportionally to the League's organizing strength, a fact League supporters noted: "The real reason for the opposition to the Nonpartisan League is that it is organized for the purpose of placing political control back into the hands of the people and has been remarkably successful in that respect," The *Seattle Union Record* stated in April 1918.[20]

Unlike previous agrarian movements, the Nonpartisan League was not a political party. Townley hoped to avoid making the League a party at all costs, recognizing third party movements fared poorly in elections. Instead, the League used direct primaries to endorse candidates friendly toward farm concerns, regardless of political parties.

NPL NEWSPAPERS IN THE NORTHWEST

The Northwest's Nonpartisan newspapers had lives of varying lengths. The Seattle-based *The Nonpartisan* and both of Idaho's League newspapers--*The Nonpartisan Journal* and the *Idaho Nonpartisan Leader*--lasted less than one year. Circulation figures are not available for any of the newspapers, but pleas from *The Nonpartisan Journal* suggest both subscriptions and advertising rates were lacking. "We must have more subscribers," *The Nonpartisan Journal* announced. "We need these extra hundreds of subscribers for their pulling value for the newspaper...that [we] can demand advertising support on the merits of its circulation and get it."[21] Money was in short supply for heavily mortgaged farmers, however. When finances became tight, subscriptions to newspapers and grange memberships lapsed.[22] The other League newspapers--*The Montana Nonpartisan*, *The Producers News*, *The Commonwealth, The Herald,* and *The Seattle Union Record*--lasted longer, but all had labor/socialist support.

Washington state's NPL newspapers supported and lobbied for League reforms, but presented a more urban, progressive, less agrarian League face than did the League's other Northwest newspapers. The newspapers reflected the organization's supporters who started their own chapter in 1916, a year before the national League headquarters began recruiting there.[23] *The Commonwealth,* begun in 1902 as a farmer-labor newspaper, was the League's official Washington newspaper from July 1916 to March 1917. The newspaper had little of the class consciousness that so permeated the League's other Northwest newspapers. It regularly encouraged the initiative, referendum, and recall, prohibition, and woman's suffrage as well as the League's national planks. *The Seattle Union Record*, a labor newspaper, also had a relatively long publishing life for a special-interest publication--twenty three years (1900-1923). *The Union Record* was not an official organ, but it was highly sympathetic to the cause and devoted much space to League news.

The Herald and *The Nonpartisan,* which both were edited by the same man, O. L. Anderson, also lobbied extensively for the initiative, for a nonpartisan press and nonpartisan election laws, workers' rights, woman's suffrage, and an end to industrial trusts. Both newspapers used Marxist/socialistic rhetoric regularly, such as referring to political bosses and business leaders as parasites.[24] *The Herald* was established as a socialist newspaper in 1915. From March through June of 1916, however, the newspaper's board agreed to change the publication's editorial direction, hired Anderson, and became an official League publication. After the board decided to redirect the paper back to its socialist roots, Anderson began *The Nonpartisan*. That journal's publishing history is uncertain. Only one issue, dated June 8, 1916, exists and it may have been the only issue.[25]

Both of Montana's NPL newspapers had comparably long-lives. Montana's farmers and laborers joined the League, and supported its newspapers, in greater numbers than did any other Northwest state because they, along with other progressive-minded citizens, wanted to get rid of the copper companies' stranglehold on Montana's legislature.[26]

The Montana Nonpartisan began publishing Sept. 14, 1918 and ceased October 1922. The newspaper, which was initially called *The Inverness News* for the first issue, then *The Montana Leader* for three weeks, was established in Great Falls. It was moved to Billings in June of 1922 and continued publishing there until its demise in late October of the same year.

The Producers News of Plentywood, Mont., which began publication April 19, 1918 and ceased March 6, 1937, was the joint product of League members and socialists. The newspaper also served as a community newspaper and offered some local fare, although the majority of its columns were devoted to League news. The League's national headquarters chose Charles E. Taylor, a journalist with experience at a number of newspapers including the *Border Call*, a Minnesota Socialist publication, to edit the newspaper.

Taylor was recalled by friends as "alternately brilliant and oddly unstable." Taylor "knew how to put himself in the farmer's place, to see issues as the farmer saw them, to express the farmer's feelings as the farmer could not."[27] He also supported socialism until the newspaper's demise. Taylor was quite openly communist, earning the nickname "Red Flag" Taylor.[28] He could afford to be open about his convictions. Plentywood was located in Sheridan County in northeastern Montana--a county whose residents voted socialist from 1918 through 1934.

The Idaho Leader also was edited by a man with prior journalistic experience. William Scholtz, who had served as the head of Idaho's farm marketing board, had run a farm newspaper prior to editing the *Leader*. His publication focused exclusively on League news. Idaho's other League publication, *The Nonpartisan Journal*, although largely focused on League news, also served as a community newspaper for the town of Filer. The publication offered local, state, and national news plus USDA articles on fruits, vegetables, and livestock.

FARMER-LABOR EMPOWERMENT

The Nonpartisan League was one of a series of farm movements aimed at empowering rural workers. Since the mid-1800s, farmers had recognized, and vigorously debated, their political powerlessness and economic impoverishment. Farmer-supported initiatives often failed when put to a vote. Agrarian organizations like the Nonpartisan League issued calls to farmer-labor solidarity in an attempt to loosen what they perceived as industrialization's political and economic grip. The League's slogan, "we'll stick--we'll win," ran in its newspapers for months before the 1918 and 1920 elections. *The Montana Nonpartisan* initiated a registration campaign, telling farmers they could not vote if they were not registered.[29]

Editors told readers that League newspapers were needed as crucial vehicles for political success. *The Commonwealth* in July 1916, for example, noted: "We cannot do anything worth while without a state newspaper. The failure of the recent initiative campaign proves the need of a publicity agent. The [North] Dakota campaign was a success because they [the League] owned their own newspaper."[30]

League newspapers never acknowledged, nor perhaps recognized, that agrarian-sponsored initiatives often failed because farmers and laborers no longer constituted a majority of voters in most states. The League's political takeover of the North Dakota legislature in 1916 provided the hope farmers and laborers sought. *The Commonwealth* told readers the victory proved that voter unity would return farming to its rightful status and bring farmers greater economic control: "The farmers are coming to the legislature once more, but this time it will be as sovereigns, not suppliants."[31] *The Montana Nonpartisan* said much the same following that state's 1918 primary. The old gang (i.e., politicians supported by copper companies) would be completely overthrown in November. Residents would soon "have a government of the people and for the people."[32]

Similarly, when the Idaho state Supreme Court ruled in August 1918 that the League could enter its candidates as democrats on the primary ballot, *The Idaho Leader* cloaked the victory in class rhetoric. The front page subhead said "Unanimous Opinion Gives Farmers, Labor and People Sweeping Victory Over Gang Politicians."[33] The newspaper continued the popular government theme in another front page article: "*The Leader* is making the fight for the farmers. It is making a fight to restore to the people what belongs to them."[34]

This David and Goliath approach was a regular theme in the League's Northwest newspapers. The publications used the language of class to constantly reiterate that big business kept farmers and laborers impoverished and powerless. For example, *The Producers News* in October 1919 criticized North Dakota's Attorney General for trying to stop farmers from establishing their own bank: "Organized farmers of North Dakota last Tuesday in Fargo struck their grimmest blow at bank wreckers, traitors to the people and monopolistic parasites that would destroy their united credit for the one purpose of holding a free people down."[35] Other League newspapers, like *The Herald,* using less inflammatory language, told readers that the most important task for true and loyal democratic citizens was to rid the nation of special privilege. Only then would real democracy be possible.[36]

League publications used political cartoons liberally to depict industrial trusts and their supporters as "Big Biz"-- rotund, wealthy, and uncaring. Similarly, in news columns, the League's enemies were always referred to as gangs. Any victory over big business led to banner headlines. When "copper crowd autocrats" tried to keep servicemen from attending a 1919 League meeting in Montana, *The Montana Nonpartisan* said: "Always and everywhere would those who had actually participated in the grim struggle with German autocracy be found actively assisting in the destruction of autocracy at home."[37] Similarly, when an official from a Portland, Oregon creamery tried, unsuccessfully, to stop a national League organizer, Ray McKaig, from speaking in Cambridge, Idaho, by telling business owners that McKaig was disloyal, the Filer newspaper blasted the business owners. The journal said farmers passed resolutions condemning the attacks on the League from both businessmen and the press. The farmers were particularly angered at the businessmen's attitudes that they somehow recognized disloyalty and farmers could not: "The insulting part of it all was that there was [sic] some people that thought the farmers could not decide for themselves the loyalty of any speaker. There is no group of farmers in the state but what would instantly stop a disloyal speech."[38]

League publications, like earlier Alliance and Populist newspapers, presented farmers as first among equals in the nation, since farmers were the country's key providers."[39] *The Producers News*, for example, regularly stated that farmers went to great risks and expense to maintain farms, yet middlemen and others who did not produce the nation's food with their own hands profited handsomely from farmers' labor.[40] Similarly, an article in *The Montana Nonpartisan* arguing for tax exemptions for farm improvements noted: "A farmer labors long and hard to raise farm produce and quite often his labors are in vain . . ."[41]

League newspapers promoted farming as a noble profession, but recognized that it no longer commanded respect. The realization that farmers were being marginalized by much of society galled farmers. As historian C. B. Macpherson notes, "The typical prairie producer has been from the beginning an independent operator of an individual or family enterprise; he has not been reduced to the status of a wage-earner dependent on employment."[42]

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League newspapers supported labor too, since laborers also produced the nation's goods with their own hands. The Northwest's League newspapers regularly covered labor issues, such as the fight for workmen's compensation and labor strikes.[43] League newspapers also supported workers not traditionally aligned with farm or labor movements. For example, both *The Nonpartisan Journal* and *The Producers News* advocated better pay for teachers. The Filer newspaper criticized the state for paying teachers extremely low wages. Schools often received second-rate teachers because the low pay discouraged talented individuals from pursing teaching careers. Children, the paper warned, were the ones who suffered. "America has had too hard a struggle to reach her present intellectual plane to afford to yield one fraction of the progress she has made. We have made too many sacrifices in the name of education and culture and intellectual and moral uplift to be willing to take one backward step." [44]

THE INFORMATION FUNCTION

League newspapers provided regular proof--through exposes of trusts--as the reason why farmers and laborers needed to remain united. The League's investigative reports on agricultural trusts were written to demonstrate that many of the nation's biggest businesses sought to cheat farmers, laborers, and consumers whenever they could. League newspapers never sought, nor provided, explanations from corporations regarding their business practices or profit margins. Instead, the publications offered statistics from authoritative sources like federal and state censuses, manufacturing, and agricultural reports as proof that the League's goals of eliminating middlemen and nationalizing many means of production were righteous. The message the newspapers provided was clear: big business was no friend of farmers.

The Nonpartisan Journal demonstrated this in May 1918 by muckraking the sugar trust. The newspaper claimed the trust exploited farmers by purchasing their sugar beets at a low price--only $7.50 to $8 per acre--then selling sugar to consumers at exorbitant rates. Not only did the farmers get cheated, consumers did as well.[45]

League newspapers also lobbied for state ownership of utilities and irrigation--crucial to so many Northwest farmers--by publicizing the high prices and poor service offered by private concerns.[46] *The Herald* reprinted an article from *The Municipal Journal* demonstrating that city ownership of utilities was more cost efficient than private ownership. For example, the article stated: "The Chicopee (Mass.) municipal plant produces 2,099,000 kilowatt hours at a cost of .02 cents a kilowatt while it costs the Plymouth Electric Lighting Company .0267 cents a kilowatt for 1,979,000 kilowatt hours. The city cost is 25 percent less than private plant cost."[47] Similarly, the *Nonpartisan Journal* ran an article by Ray McKaig supporting a citizen-owned power and light company in Twin Falls, Idaho because the company provided its services at cost.[48]

Irrigation outfits faced special scrutiny in NPL newspapers because thousands of Northwestern farmers' fortunes were tied to massive irrigation projects. Even in years when rainfall was plentiful, it often was not enough for the region's largely dryland farmers. In drought years, like those following World War I, farmers went bankrupt.[49] In August of 1918 *The Idaho Leader* said the state needed to take over water distribution--a League plank--since a private irrigation company controlling the Snake River's water had proven itself incompetent. Alfalfa and potato crops were badly damaged because water distribution was poorly managed: "The water has been turned off of the Carey Act ditches, the settlers declared, and is now dribbling through 11 miles of weed-grown and grass-grown canal into the big reservoir, where it is doing no good, while the farmers who have been sweltering over their land are sitting by and seeing the results of their year's labor shrivel and turn brown beneath their eyes."[50]

League newspapers also reported on the progress of agrarian and labor legislation both locally and nationally. Publications vigorously criticized the Northwest's state legislatures for their failures to provide low-cost hail insurance, tax exemptions for farm improvements, drought relief, and an end to profiteering--all planks the League endorsed.[51] Similarly, League newspapers reported federal plans during the war years to fix food prices. The newspapers supported price fixing, telling readers middlemen's speculation would be eliminated and farmers would make more money.[52]

During election years, candidates' platforms were covered in depth. Farm and labor-friendly candidates were highlighted, especially those who agreed with some or all of the League's planks. For example, an October 1918 *The Producers News* editorial told voters a farm candidate named Clair Stoner should be elected to Montana's legislature rather than his banker opponent because Stoner supported an end to private insurance companies. State-run companies would be created, offering farmers much lower rates.[53]

League newspapers regularly promoted nonpartisan elections, saying these were the truest form of democracy. Such elections were the best means of taking political power away from industrial trusts. In an April 1918 editorial, for example, the Filer *Nonpartisan Journal* said nonpartisan elections would result in more than merely putting men in offices to draw state salaries: "The Nonpartisan League proposes to elect men to office who are pledged to certain reforms of legislation . . . Men who will make laws for the benefit of the farmer and consumer, who have so long been neglected . . ."[54]

The Herald, in April 1916, even reprinted part of George Washington's farewell address because Washington viewed political parties as "the worst enemy of democratic government." Power-hungry part leaders could bring about the "ruins of public liberty," the former president said.[55]

To encourage readers to gather signatures for Washington state's 1916 nonpartisan initiative, *The Nonpartisan* hammered home the significance of the proposed legislation: "The adoption of Initiative Measure No. 19 will make it possible for you to go to the primaries and vote your choice for public office without branding yourself as to your political affiliations, perhaps risking your job in so doing. Isn't that feature alone worth spending a couple of hours to get signatures for the bill?"[56]

Much of the political news in the League's Northwest newspapers focused on the efforts of anti-League legislators to disenfranchise farmers and laborers from the voting process. The League's success in the Northwest (and elsewhere) so unnerved many politicians and members of the public that the direct primary system was abolished for a time in Idaho, Nebraska, and Kansas. Minnesota, Montana, and Colorado narrowly defeated similar bills.[57]

Washington state's League newspapers in 1916 virulently opposed the Whitney Registration law which required farmers to register before voting. The law was aimed at stopping voter fraud. Farmers opposed the law, arguing that registration in rural districts was unnecessary. Farmers knew each other, thus the possible of fraud was minimal. Some granges even argued that they would not support candidates for office unless those candidates agreed to repeal the law.[58] Nonpartisan League opposition to the law was so strong that Washington's

State Grange Master, C. B. Kegley, endorsed the NPL.[59]

Washington's League newspapers claimed the law was a deliberate attempt to disenfranchise farmers. The August 30, 1916 issue of *The Commonwealth* said: "A law requiring registration and providing no convenient place and no office hours when people could register after having traveled miles to do it, was a very thoughtful piece of work on the part of the legislators to keep the farmers from initiating measures. It succeeded. And the legislators say the people are incompetent to make laws for themselves!"[60]

When four farmer-supported initiatives failed later the same year, both *The Nonpartisan* and *The Commonwealth* blamed the failure on the rural registration law as well as the state's major metropolitan dailies, particularly the *Seattle Star*, for opposing the initiatives. Yet an editorial warned that the Nonpartisan League was growing and would soon be a major political force: "There is a political party in this state, slumbering right now, but giving the promise of waking up refreshed for the task of a constructive political program in the pending campaign which may include all the initiative measures which have just met with defeat."[61]

Similarly, when Montana legislators tried to abolish the state's direct primary system, *The Montana Nonpartisan* ran a "save the primary" campaign for most of 1919. It told readers they must register to vote then sign initiative petitions to save the primary. A May 1919 editorial praised readers' efforts: "You are showing immense determination to save the primary from the hands of those who would destroy it," the publication said in May 1919.[62] It also ran letters from farmers supporting the primary, such as one from a Forsythe farmer: "Please send me two of those petitions for the referendum. I will get a neighbor to take one of them. The farmers have as much right to say who shall be our officers as anybody."[63]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LEGITIMATING THE LEAGUE

Farmers' and laborers' very vocal demands for better working conditions coupled with the outbreak of World War I led to substantial anti-League and anti-labor beliefs and actions across the Northwest. League members were denounced by business leaders and urban residents, denied meeting space, and even attacked in the streets. Many non-League newspapers portrayed the organization as subversive, socialistic, and pro-German. For example, the *Idaho County Free Press* of Grangeville, Idaho in January of 1918 attempted to prove the League disloyal during World War I by reporting on the audience at a local NPL meeting: "One who had the slightest reason to doubt the pro-German tendencies of the organization would have had his doubts dispelled if he had been present at the meeting and observed the large number of German farmers from Cottonwood and Ferdinand."[64] The newspaper failed to acknowledge that many of western Idaho's farmers were German immigrants and, therefore, almost any farm-related meeting would have German farmers.

No proof was ever presented that members were disloyal or pro-German, yet the NPL newspapers devoted extensive space fighting the claims.[65] The League's founder, North Dakota flax farmer A. C. Townley, like some League members, had indeed been socialists or American Society of Equity members. And before World War I's outbreak, many farmers had been antiwar.[66]

The disloyalty issue plagued the League throughout the movement's history. Anti-German fever was especially prevalent in the Northwest. "Support for the war effort [in the Northwest] sometimes verged on paranoia," historian Leonard Arrington has noted.[67] In Idaho, for example, fear of German sabotage caused the state's government to post guards at public utilities, grain elevators, and bridges. State Councils of Defense, established to help with the war effort, including bond drives, often turned vicious. Defense members became vigilantes and sought out anyone thought to be disloyal, subversive, or a deserter. Many NPL and I.W.W. members were rounded up, arrested, or often just outright beaten by members of the councils and state loyalty leagues. Theodore Roosevelt's comparison of the Leaguers to Bolsheviks in an October 1918 speech only further convinced anti-League elements of the rightness of their cause.[68] The situation was exacerbated by mining and lumber camp strikes to protest living and working conditions. Frightened citizens called upon their governors to declare martial law. State legislators also took matters into their own hands and passed criminal syndicalism laws.

The emotionally-tense atmosphere frequently turned violent for both NPL and I.W.W. members. In June of 1917 a Montana I.W.W leader, Frank Little, was hanged after making an anti-war speech.[69] Later that year, NPL organizer Mickey McGlynn was dragged out of an Elks Club in Miles City and severely beaten. Although the attorney general and local police tried to bring charges against the vigilantes who beat McGlynn, a local judge dismissed the charges. Opponents subsequently grabbed Leaguers and threw them into jail. [70]

Left with no venues for recourse, League members used their newspapers to defend League members' loyalty and denounce the acts of violence. For example, *The Producers News* responded to the McGlynn incident by running a banner headline stating "Miles City Has Gone Stark Mad." In the article the newspaper claimed, "officials are drunk with power."[71] In the same issue, *The Producers News* told its readers that similar mob violence against the League was occurring in Minnesota. The newspaper stated that since business interests had been unable to stop the League by economic arguments, those businessmen used vigilantes to attack NPL members and encouraged local politicians to pass laws which forbid freedom of speech and assembly, "in open defiance to the United States Constitution."[72]

Profiteers, *The Producers News* claimed in a May 1918 editorial, were the real disloyalists. Business leaders held up war preparations, prolonged the war, and caused needless deaths, the newspaper stated. "It is treason in the worst form and the men responsible should face a firing squad."[73] The *Idaho Nonpartisan Leader* agreed, reprinting a statement from A. C. Townley under the banner "Patriotism": "Any man who urges a larger food production without also urging the elimination of food speculators and gamblers, who refuse to let this food reach the mouths of the hungry, not only is not a patriot, but is an ally of the kaiser and one of the worst enemies this country has."[74]

The Producers News, in two June 7, 1818 articles, also refuted one of the most serious charges against the League: the claim that wheat farmers were taking advantage of increased food prices caused by the war to reap huge profits.[75] Farmers had long argued that middlemen seeking profits were largely responsible for the price of wheat. The newspaper said that although war had increased the price of wheat substantially, farm machine prices also had increased substantially. As a result, farmers were said to have the smallest incomes out of all skilled occupations.[76]

Nonpartisan newspapers also attacked the claim that the League was financed by German interests and thus was pro-German. *The Idaho Leader* detailed how the organization handled contributions as well as what individuals contributed to the League. The newspaper reiterated that the League took no money from Germany and was opposed to German militarism and autocracy.[77] An editorial in the same issue of *The Idaho Leader* slammed League critics by quoting Secretary of War Newton Baker: "In every locality we have a contemptible set of cowardly politicians who cry `treason, sedition, anarchy, and pro-German' against men who differ with them politically. The claims of `Americanism and loyalty' put forth by these narrow bigots are nothing more than false faces worn by traitors."[78]

League newspapers also tried to squelch rumors of alliances between the NPL and the I.W.W. The May 1920 issue of the *Montana Leader,* for example, ran a letter from a national League manager reiterating that the League and the I.W.W. were not united. The League's enemies had consistently circulated the rumor, the letter added. The Nonpartisan League would have nothing to gain by such an alliance since the two organizations' methods and objectives differed.[79]

Articles and political cartoons parodied and denounced critics, displaying them as buffoons. For example, the March 28, 1918 front page of the *Nonpartisan Journal* featured a political cartoon of "big biz" standing atop a pile of money with a conductor's baton, leading a chorus who sang "the Nonpartisan League is disloyal."[80]

The disloyalty charges hindered the League's growth and acceptance throughout its existence. The League brought some of the blame upon itself by inviting Wisconsin Senator Robert LaFollette to be the group's keynote speaker at the League's 1917 national convention in Minnesota. LaFollette reiterated his opposition to America's entry into the war, causing a media frenzy. One newspaper called the conference "a war dance of disloyalty."[81]

Following LaFollette's speech, crowds in Big Timber and Columbus, Mont. refused to let an NPL organizer get off his train. Other organizers were beaten or arrested and once-vacant meeting halls became quickly unavailable when League members sought them.[82]

Even though President Woodrow Wilson and his chief war propagandist, George Creel, both proclaimed the members of the NPL loyal citizens, their endorsements did not convince the public.[83] League newspapers seized upon the endorsement nevertheless. The *Seattle Union Record* noted: "The charge that the Nonpartisan League is unpatriotic is the veriest tommyrot, amply disproven by the fact that President Wilson has himself called on its president, A.C. Townley, for advice and counsel in dealing with matters of interest to farmers."[84]

When *The New Republic* printed a lengthy expose of the League which refuted all of the disloyalty arguments, League newspapers rushed to reprint the article in its entirety.[85] Similarly, the *Nonpartisan Journal* reprinted an editorial from the *New York American* which proclaimed Townley's loyalty following his arrest in St. Paul on draft obstruction charges. The *American* claimed Townley's arrest was nothing more than a political trick.[86] The *Nonpartisan Journal* concurred, reiterating that League opposition was class based: "Big Business--the milling trust, the packers, the steel trust, the lumber ring and the insurance combine--realizes that success of the League program means the speedy termination of its industrial domination. The millions of dollars of profits which Big Business extorts from the producers of this nation every year is at stake. The word has gone out to destroy the League by fair means or foul. Fair means have failed--now Big Business is resorting to foul tactics and Townley's arrest was logically in order."[87]

League newspapers also printed letters of support from other farm and labor organizations, such as the American Society of Equity, demonstrating that working class individuals did indeed "stick together" in the face of opposition from big business.[88]

League publications also demonstrated members' loyalty by publicizing League war efforts. Front page articles told readers that they had oversubscribed to war bonds, increased wheat production when asked by President Wilson, and volunteered for military service, rather than waiting for the draft.[89]

League publications also stressed the organization's legitimacy by demonstrating that League reforms were effective. For example, *The Producers News* ran an article in November of 1918 touting the success of Manitoba's rural credit banks. The banks were operated at cost, which critics suggested could not be done.[90] Similarly, *The Montana Leader* announced in 1919 that the League's draft of a workmen's compensation law would become a reality since labor groups supported the act. [91]

Newspapers touted political victories, such as the election of more than 100 League members to Montana offices in 1918, as the ultimate proof of legitimacy. *The Montana Nonpartisan,* for example, proclaimed: "No longer will the copper mantel completely cover the Legislative Halls in its stifling embrace, no longer will the forces of reaction dominate absolutely the law making machinery of the state, the League has arrived and is here to stay."[92]

CONCLUSION

The Nonpartisan League followed the tradition of earlier agrarian reform movements like the Grangers, the Alliance, and Populism by using newspapers to unite farmers politically and to spread the organization's reform message. The publications also served as a means of defending the group against critics. League newspapers promoted farming as the nation's most noble occupation. Farmers were told that they could regain their power and social status by banding together and overthrowing powerful trusts.

League publications relied on the rhetoric of class consciousness to exhort the organization's members to support the League's planks. Only through public ownership of utilities, transportation, and food storage and production facilities could farmers be returned to their rightful station of political and economic power.

The publications also used exposes of corporations to demonstrate that trusts were of value to no one, save the owners of the trusts. League newspapers used facts and figures from federal manufacturing annuals to demonstrate where the nation's profits actually went.

League newspapers had to deviate from their fight for farmers' rights in order to refute charges that the organization was unpatriotic and socialist in its intentions. Virtually every issue of the Northwest's NPL newspapers promoted League members' loyalty and patriotism. The newspapers also vigorously counterattacked critics with articles, editorials, and political cartoons.

The League's newspapers are valuable to historians because they highlight the methods used by an agrarian insurgency movement to gain, and keep members. Furthermore, the study finds parallels to the news content of earlier agrarian insurgency movements. This suggests agrarian leaders' newspaper tactics remained largely the same over time. This finding supports historian William Pratt's assertion that agrarian protest movements had both philosophical and membership ties to one another. Many farmers and laborers belonged to more than one of these movements, joining new agrarian movements after the previous movement became defunct. As a result, the organizations shared many of the same goals and rhetoric.[93]

Notes

1. *Proceedings of the Washington State Grange*, 1890, reprinted in Harriet Ann Crawford, *The Washington State Grange 1889-1924: A Romance of Democracy*, 132.

2. Robert L. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915-1922* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1983), 177-178. Joseph Golden was the business manager of the Seattle-based League newspaper, *The Herald*.

3. William C. Pratt makes this clear in his article. See: "Radicals, Farmers, and Historians: Some Recent Scholarship about Agrarian Radicalism in the Upper Midwest," *North Dakota History*, vol. 52(4) (Fall 1985), 12-21.

4. Pratt, "Radicals, Farmers, and Historians," 12-21. All of the NPL newspapers cited in this study regularly ran advertisements seeking organizers and lecturers for the League.

5. Bill G. Reid, "John Miller Baer: Nonpartisan League Cartoonist and Congressman," *North Dakota History*, vol. 44(1) (Winter 1977), 4-13.

6. For more on the manpower shortage, see: Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire,* 150.

7. The newspapers studied varied in the amount of letters from farmers published. Some, like *The Nonpartisan Journal* of Filer, Idaho ran very few letters. Other newspapers, such as *The Producers News* had a regular section on the editorial page called the "open forum" for letters. *The Montana Leader* had no designated spot for letters, and often ran letters on page one if they were relevant to the leading stories in a particular issue.

8. The Farmers' Alliance also used stock companies to establish newspapers. *The Producers News* and *The Nonpartisan Journal* were owned by stock-holding farmers. For more on another stock-run NPL newspaper, see: Bruce L. Larson, "A Kansas Newspaper and the Nonpartisan League, 1919-1920," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 49 (1) (Spring 1972), 98-106

9. Great Falls was the only city in Montana at the time of the League whose newspapers were not owned by one of the state's copper companies. Although many metropolitan newspapers throughout the Northwest vigorously opposed the Nonpartisan League, the organization found supporters among farmer and labor newspapers, particularly *The Weiser Signal*, of Weiser, Idaho, a farm newspaper, and the *Butte Bulletin*, a labor newspaper.

10. Jean Folkerts, "Functions of the Reform Press," *Journalism History*, Vol. 12 (1) (Spring 1985), 22. Three individual League newspapers have been studied previously. See: Mader, "The North Dakota Press," 321-332; Harold L. Nelson, "The Political Reform Press: A Case Study," *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 29(3) (Summer 1952), 294-302; Bruce L. Larson, "A Kansas Newspaper and the Nonpartisan League, 1919-1920," *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 49(1) (Spring 1972), 98-106.

11. Folkerts, "Functions of the Reform Press," 22. See also: Theodore Mitchell, *Political Education in the Southern Farmers' Alliance, 1887-1900* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), particularly chapter 4; and, Roscoe C. Martin, *The People's Party In Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Bulletin, 1912), chapter 8.

12. The League also tried to gain a foothold in the province of Manitoba as well as several other U.S. states, but according to historian Robert L. Morlan, some states had progressive governments who fended off the League's encroachment attempts by passing legislation which helped farmers. In Manitoba, Morlan noted, political parties were entrenched and the conservative Grain Growers' Association had too much strength. See: Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, 79, 123, 150, 277.

13. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, 177.

14. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, 344.

15. No headline, *The Seattle Union Record*, 28 May 1918, 6; "The League and the I.W.W.," *The Seattle Union Record*, 7 June 1918, 8;"No Connection Between League and the I.W.W.," *The Montana Leader*, 29 May 1920, 1.

16. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, 106-107.

17. See, for example, "Good Roads For Washington," *Agricultural Grange News*, 1 January 1913, 9; "Shall The People Or The Interests Rule?" *Agricultural Grange News*, 1 June 1914, 4; "Federal Investment Banks,"*Agricultural Grange News*, 1 August 1915, 1; "Must Settle Land Question To Obtain Relief," *Agricultural Grange* News, 1 November 1915, 1; "Lower Taxes On Farms," *Agricultural Grange News*, 1 May 1916, 1. See also: Crawford, *The Washington State Grange*; Solon Justus Buck, *The Granger Moment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913); John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931); James H. Shideler, *Farm Crisis 1919-1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957); *Socialism in the Heartland:The Midwestern Experience, 1900-1925*, ed. Donald T. Critchlow (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986); Theodore R. Mitchell, *Political Education in the Southern Farmers' Alliance, 1887-1900* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

18. "Resolutions Passed by the Grange," *The Goldendale Sentinel*, 20 July 1916, 1.

19. Hugh Lovin, "The Nonpartisan League and Progressive Renascence in Idaho, 1919-1924, *Idaho Yesterdays*, Vol. 32 (3) (Fall 1988), 2-15.

20. No headline, *Seattle Union Record*, 29 April 1918, 8.

21. "Nonpartisan Journal Launches `Every Member Get One' Subscription Campaign," *The Nonpartisan Journal*, 18 April 1918, 4. Similarly, *The Nonpartisan* ran a plug at the bottom of

page one which stated: "Will you place your spare copy where it may bring a sub?" See *The Nonpartisan*, 8 June 1916, 1.

22. Farmers frequently mentioned indebtedness as a reason why grange and newspaper memberships lapsed. For example, see the letters to the editor in the *Montana Nonpartisan*, "They Say We'll Stick," *Montana Nonpartisan*, 22 February 1919, 3

23. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, 122.

24. "Farmers of State Talk Citizenship and Cooperation," *The Nonpartisan*, 8 June 1916, 2.

25. "What's the Idea--An Editorial Statement," *The Nonpartisan*, 8 June 1916, 5.

26. Michael P. Malone and Richard E. Roeder, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 197. See also: "Montana Labor In Politics," *The Producers News*, 5 March 1920, 1.

27. Charles Vindex, "Radical Rule in Montana," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 18 (January 1968): 6. Taylor also exhibited some of the worst tendencies of yellow journalism, attacking enemies with a highly poisonous pen. See, for example: "Endorsed," 10 May 1918, 3; "Sheridan County Loyalty League Endorses Ticket," 13 September 1918; "J. F. Redmond, Stung By Prospects of Defeat, Resort to Human 'Maggot' Method," 11 October 1918, 1.

28. Vindex, "Radical Rule in Montana," 8.

29. Grange newspapers also told farmers to register to vote.

30. "To The Nonpartisans And Their Friends," *The Commonwealth*, 26 July 1916, 1. See also: "What's The Idea?--An Editorial Statement," *The Nonpartisan*, 8 June 1916, 5. "If we cannot democratize the press of the republic we might as well abolish the republic itself," proclaimed *The Nonpartisan* in a page 5 editorial in its June 8, 1916 edition.

31. "Political Miracle Performed in North Dakota by Nonpartisans," *The Commonwealth*," 26 July 1916, 3. For a similar view by a farmer, see: "Another Prize Letter," *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 1 February 1919, 3.

32. "Victory Perches on Banners of Nonpartisan League in Montana," *The Montana Leader*, 7 September 1918, 1.

33. "N. P. League Wins Supreme Court Decision," *The Idaho Leader*, 17 August 1918, 1.

34. "Three Months For 25 Cents," *The Idaho Leader*, 17 August 1918, 1.

35. "N. D. Farmers Answer Langer with Money," *The Producers News*, 24 October 1919, 1.

36. See, for example, C. F. Muckler, "Nonpartisanship is Protest Against Usurped Authority," *The Nonpartisan*, 8 June 1916, 7; "Employer Association Uses Courts To Block Direct Legislation," *The Herald*, 10 March 1916, 1; "The Standing Army of Special Privilege," *The Herald*, 31 March 1916, 4, and "Low Wages Make Men Inefficient," *The Herald*, 31 March 1916, 3.

37. "League-Labor Night Tremendous Success," *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 1 February 1919, 1.

38. "Attempts Fail To Close Nonpartisan League Rally At Cambridge, Idaho," *Nonpartisan Journal*, 18 April 1918, 4.

39. Mitchell, *Political Education in the Southern Farmers' Alliance*, 10-11.

40. "Middlemen Take Bulk of Values," *The Producers News*, 2 January 1920, 3. In the same issue the newspaper noted that coal miners faced the same situation. See: "Owners Violated Coal Agreement," *The Producers News*, 2 January 1920, 4.

41. "Exemption Of Farm Improvements From Taxation," *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 17 May 1919, 4.

42. C. B. Macpherson, *Democracy In Alberta: Social Credit And The Party System,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 10.

43. "Labor Council May Combine With Grange," *Seattle Union Record*, 5 September 1918, 1; "Labor Declares Referendum 6 Vital," *The Commonwealth*, 11 October 1916, 2; "Industrial Compensation To Be Reality," *The Montana Nonpartisan,* 11 January 1919, 1; "The Legislature and Labor," *The Herald*, 14 April 1916, 3; "Labor is Getting Less," *The Producers News*, 30 July 1920, 4..

44. "The Schools In Danger Unless We Pay Instructors Better Salaries," *The Nonpartisan Journal*, 2 May 1918, 4.

45. "Beet Producers Robbed by Trust," *The Nonpartisan Journal*, 9 May 1918, 6. Similar articles appeared in Montana's League newspapers investigating the sugar beet trust in that state. See: "Startling Conditions In Sugar Beet Industry Exposed," *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 11 January 1919, 1. For an expose of the steel trust, see: "The Steal Of The Steel Trust," *The Herald*, 9 June 1916, 3.

46. "Eagleson Moves To Tax Power Trust on $8,000,000 Valuation," *The Idaho Leader*, 24 August 1918, 1.

47. "Onward March of Public Ownership," *The Herald*, 21 April 1916, 3.

48. "Mutual Power Concern Gets Big Boost From Man In Position To Know Benefits Of Co-operation," *The Nonpartisan Journal*, 23 May 1918, 1.

49. League newspapers as well as small-town publications were filled with advertisements of farm and equipment auctions in the years following the war.

50. "Water Goes To Waste While Crops Dry Up," *The Idaho Leader*, 24 August 1919, 1.

51. For criticism of Republicans for their failure to end profiteering, see: "More Film-Flam Politics Staged," *The Producers News*, 11 August 1918, 1; "Tax Reform Laws Work in Canada," *The Producers News*, 10 May 1918, 4; "Montana Farmers Lose on Hail Insurance," *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 7 December 1918, 1; "Drought Relief Cost Tax Payers 32 Per Cent," *The Producers News*, 2 January 1920, 1.

52. "Fixing Prices On Potatoes Is Discussed," *The Nonpartisan Journal*, 2 May 1918, 1; "1918 Price Of Wheat Will Be Held For 1919," *The Inverness News*, 7 September 1918, 2.

53. "Two Platforms," *The Producers News*, 11 October 1918, 4.

54. "No Time For A New Movement! Yet Old Parties May Launch Coalition Ticket," *Nonpartisan Journal*, 25 April 1918, 4.

55. "George Washington Foresaw Danger Of Partisanship," *The Herald*, 14 April 1916, 1. See also: "Scripps League Papers To Support Nonpartisan Law," *The Herald*, 7 April 1916, 1.

56. "Do You Want Freedom at the Polls?" *The Nonpartisan*, 8 June 1916, 1.

57. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire*, 239.

58. "Resolutions Passed," *The Goldendale Sentinel*, 25 May 1916, 1.

59. "Master of Grange Endorses Our Plan," *The Commonwealth*, 30 August 1916, 3. See also: "Shall Plan to Kill Direct Legislation Succeed,' *The Herald*, 19 May 1916, 1.

60. "Governor Mixed Up With Vicious Legislation," *The Commonwealth*, 30 August 1916, 2.

61. "Who Killed the 'Four Brothers,'" *The Commonwealth*, 26 July 1916, 2.

62. "Save The Primary," *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 17 May 1919, 4.

63. No headline, *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 17 May 1919, 1.

64. "The New Party," *Idaho County Free Press*, 21 January 1918, 3.

65. Virtually every issue of every League newspaper studied featured at least one article and one editorial defending the League. For a few examples, see: "Nonpartisan League Under Barrage Fire," *Seattle Union Record*, 30 April 1918, 8; "Profiteers Are The Real Disloyalists And They Howl Against League," *The Nonpartisan Journal*, 9 May 1918, 4; "Loyalty League Literature," *The Montana Leader*, 22 February 1919, 4. Only one newspaper, *The Nonpartisan*, was antiwar. The June 8, 1916 issue on page 4 featured a cartoon of a skeleton rider on a skeleton horse holding a banner stating "war." The caption read: Forward March. An antiwar article, "Truth is Told About Militarism in Schools," ran on the same page.

66. Some of the best sources for farmers' antiwar sentiment can be seen in grange newspapers. For example, "War--What For?" *Agricultural Grange News*," 1 October 1914, 1; "Peace and Neutrality Wilson's Aim," *The Commonwealth*, 27 September 1916, 4. Once President Woodrow Wilson involved America in World War I, however, the granges rallied around the President, supporting his decision.

67. Leonard J. Arrington, *The History of Idaho,* Vol. 2 (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1994), 10.

68. "A Friend of the Farmers," *Seattle Union Record*, 14 October 1918, 8. The newspaper noted in an editorial: "...the more we see of the limitations of Teddy's point of view, the more we wonder who it is that wrote and accepted that Progressive party platform some years ago." See also: "Roosevelt Exposed," *Seattle Union Record*, 15 October 1918, 8.

69. Little's murder was never solved. For more, see: Malone and Roeder, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, 212.

70. Malone and Roeder, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, 212-214. Even after the war ended, League leaders were regularly banned from speaking within city limits. See: "Timber Barons Again Refuse Free Speech," *The Idaho Leader*, 2 October 1920, 1.

71. "Miles City Has Gone Stark Mad," *The Producers News*, 17 May 1918, 1.

72. "Interests Try to Suppress League," *The Producers News*, 17 May 1918, 2. Similarly, *The Herald* reported that Washington state's political parties opposed nonpartisan elections. See: "Bosses Vote Down Nonpartisanship," *The* Herald 5 May 1916, 1.

73. "Profiteers Real Disloyalists," *The Producers News*, 17 May 1918, 5.

74. "Patriotism," *Idaho Nonpartisan Leader*,reprinted in the *Pacific Northwest Agricultural Grange News*, 1 July 1917, 1. Only four copies of the *Leader* are known to exist. The exact date this article was run in the *Leader* is unknown.

75. See "Makes the Farmers a Target," and "Special Legislative Session," editorials reprinted in the *Idaho County Free Press*, 7 January 1918, 3.

76. "Machinery Prices Still Going Up," and "Farmer's Income is Smallest Average in Industrial Field," *The Producers News*, 7 June 1918, 2-3.

77. "How Farmer Members Finance Their League," *The Idaho Leader*, 17 August 1918, 3.

78. No headline, *The Idaho Leader*, 17 August 1918, 6.

79. A. Budden, "No Connection Between League And The I.W.W.," *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 29 May 1920, 1.

80. "Bunking the Farmer," *Seattle Union Record*, 4 November 1918, 8.

81. Gaston, *The Nonpartisan League*, 210.

82. "Cow-Town Chamber of Commerce Attacks Another League Organizer," *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 1 March 1919, 1; "Mob Tactics Meet Defeat," *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 24 April 1920, 1.

83. Many articles covering George Creel's support for the League appeared in the organization's newspapers. See, for example, "Two Views of It," *Seattle Union Record*, 25 June 1918, 6.

84. "League Defended in Senate by Reactionary N.D. Member," *Seattle Union Record*, 24 October 1918, 7.

85. "The Nonpartisan League And The Loyalty Issue," *The Montana Leader*, 7 October 1918, 2.

86. "New York American Says That Townley Is Loyal," and "Community Day Celebration At Buhl Was Big Success Answering Kaiser's Attack," *The Nonpartisan Journal*, 28 March 1918, 1.

87. "League Foes Grew Desperate, And Have Resorted To Foul Tactics," *The Nonpartisan Journal*, 28 March 1918, 4.

88. "Proud Of League And Its Work," *The Idaho Leader*, 17 August 1918, 3.

89. "Wheat Acreage Increased About Ten Percent," and "Loan Drive Shows League Patriotism," *The Nonpartisan Journal*, 2 May 1918, 1.

90. "State Rural Credit Banks Work in Province of Manitoba," *The Producers News*, 29 November 1918, 1.

91. "Industrial Compensation To Be Reality," *The Montana Leader*, 11 January 1919, 1.

92. "League Scores First Victory In Montana," *The Montana Nonpartisan*, 30 November 1918, 1.

93. Pratt, "Radicals, Farmers, and Historians," 14.

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Birth Control Crusade: The Public Relations Campaign

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Birth Control Crusade: The Public Relations Campaign

The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century marked the start of modern public relations. Tradition credits this beginning primarily to men who were press agents and publicists for business and industry. The public relations field might be better served by a more inclusive historical foundation. This article argues for this more inclusive history that involves more of those who were outside the boundaries of powerful institutions in society. Specifically, many social cause campaigns earlier in the twentieth century and their use of public-relations type methods have been, for the most part, ignored or minimized in discussions of public relations history. These social causes deserve more examination for the sake not only of the particular campaign but for the broader historical perspective their activities contribute to the public relations practice. This paper studies Margaret Sanger's Birth Control Campaign and its use of public relations-type methods to create social change. This Campaign is a valuable example of how social causes have contributed to the development of public relations practice. The study analyzes how the Campaign established objectives, targeted audiences, applied communication strategies and tactics, evaluated progress, and achieved identifiable results. By stepping beyond the traditional boundaries of twentieth-century public relations history to examine the Birth Control Campaign, this study attempts to broaden those boundaries thus giving the public relations field greater historical value and credibility.

Birth Control Crusade: The Public Relations Campaign

Introduction

The end of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century marked the beginning of modern, professionalized public relations. The practice developed in the context of important economic, technological and social changes identified with the period. They included changes in values and the rise of egalitarianism (Pearson, 1992). Traditionally the beginning of modern public relations is credited primarily to press agents and publicists for business and industry which was faced with mounting journalistic and public scrutiny and dissatisfaction.

Various historical accounts (Hiebert, 1966; Olasky, 1987; Pimlott, 1951; Smythe, 1981; Tedlow, 1979) differ in their interpretations of public relations' past from a simple straight line of progression to a more complex and ambiguous development. However, they all focus their historical reviews of the evolution of public relations on institutions of power, primarily business enterprises.

It can be argued that the excessive focus of public relations history on press agents and publicists for business contributes to the continuing limited view held by many about today's public relations practice. Byerly (1993) notes:

> Standard PR histories have, until recently, been so concerned with keeping their interpretation of the most significant public relations developments in the domain of private enterprise that they have even relegated powerful, legitimate organizations unconnected to corporations to the periphery of the field. (p. 6)

The public relations field might be better served by a more inclusive historical foundation. Such a history should include not only those who were aligned with powerful institutions but also those in the margins who sought establishment access. There are increasing contributions to this broader public relations history, particularly as it has developed in the twentieth century. Pearson (1992) notes that there is "no single, privileged interpretation of public relations' past" (p. 113). Newsom, Scott, & Turk (1993) finds, "Public relations as a concept has no central, identifying founder, national origin or founding date because it focuses on efforts to influence, not only opinions but behavior" (p. 33). Durham (1993) notes, "public relations is also practiced outside of the walls of institutional hierarchy where conflict, not stasis, is the norm and where change is the goal" (p. 28). Byerly (1993) records, "both those in positions of legitimate authority and those who have sought to gain access to it have used public relations strategies, tools, and evaluation measures to effect their goals" (p. 7).

Specifically, many social cause campaigns in this century and their use of public relations-type methods have been, for the most part, ignored or minimized in discussions of public relations history (see, for example, Baskin & Aronoff, 1992; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985; Dilenschneider & Forrestal, 1987; Dunn, 1986; J. E. Grunig & Hunt, 1984; McElreath, 1993; Newsom et al., 1993; Seitel, 1992; Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1992). Women, who often led these social cause campaigns, are noticeably absent from early twentieth century public relations history due partly to the historical focus on the public relations-like practices for institutions of power which were the domain of men. L. A. Grunig (1992) noted the limits of contribution history, but added, "Including the story of women's contributions to the development of public relations undoubtedly would change the historical view of the field significantly" (p. 78). These social causes deserve more examination for the sake not only of the particular campaign but for the broader historical perspective their activities contribute to the public relations practice (Byerly, 1993).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to argue for and contribute to a more inclusive public relations history by examining Margaret Sanger's Birth Control Campaign and its use of public relations-type methods in service of a cause aimed at creating social change in the face of significant opposition. Wilcox et al. (1992) notes, "Among the most widely known advocates of social causes in the twentieth century who effectively used some of the techniques of public relations were Margaret Sanger, founder of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America..." (p. 56).

Sanger did not invent the concept of controlling births or medical ways of doing so. She did launch a campaign in America to overcome freedom of expression restrictions on the topic and to educate women about contraceptive methods. Her campaign championed the concept "of the right of every woman to total sovereignty over her own person" (Coigney, 1969, p. 12). Sanger stated the central message of the campaign this way: "Birth control is the keynote of a new social awakening, an awakening of the parent towards a responsibility for its offspring, an awaking of the individual towards the consequences of his act. It is not only a welfare and economic expedient. It is a great social principle" (quoted in Lader, 1955, p. 98).

Center and Jackson (1990) recognize Sanger's birth control cause as a campaign: Four years after she started, Margaret Sanger's campaign indisputably had the aura of a movement with the potential of a social revolution" (p. 239). Newsom et al. (1993) describe campaigns as "designed and developed to address an issue, to solve a problem or to correct or improve a situation. They accomplish these purposes by changing a behavior; by modifying a law or opinion" (p. 474). Public relations literature is filled with varying discussions of the elements that are necessary for a campaign. Newsom et al. (1993) discusses five principles of a successful campaign:

> (1) assessment of the needs, goals and capabilities of priority publics; (2) systematic campaign planing and production; (3) continuous monitoring and evaluation to see what is working and where extra effort needs to be made; (4) consideration of the complementary roles of mass media and interpersonal communication; (5) selection of the appropriate media for each priority public, with due consideration of that medium's ability to deliver the message. (p. 475)

Tucker and Derelian (1989) says, "Public relations campaigns are an investment in getting people to appreciate a point of view or action, an opportunity to demonstrate the benefit of adopting an intended attitude or behavior" (p. 2). Seitel (1992) notes, "The public relations campaign puts all of the aspects of public relations planning: objectives, strategies, research, tactics, and evaluation into one cohesive whole" (p. 61).

As this study demonstrates, the Birth Control Campaign, like typical public-relations campaigns, established objectives with measurable outcomes; targeted specific audiences; utilized strategies and tactics involving interpersonal and mediated communication; monitored progress; and achieved identifiable results.

Findings

A daughter of Irish working class parents, Sanger was born in 1879 and raised in Corning, New York; where she was exposed early in life to the dismal economic conditions of working class immigrants and the physical toll that multiple births took on women. Her father, who was involved in a variety of causes that brought him "socialist" acquaintances, exposed her to social activism. His rebellious activities ostracized him and his family from their community and their Catholic religion. She was further exposed to dreadful social conditions among New York City's poor working classes when her nursing career brought her in contact with numerous women suffering from multiple births or attempts at self-induced abortion. These experiences and "socialist" acquaintances were the foundation of her activist campaign inclinations (Coigney, 1969, chap. 1).

Her first experiences in informational activities began in 1912 when she was invited to speak to a small socialist meeting of women in New York City. Not feeling qualified to discuss politics or labor movements, she spoke on what she knew best, health, and she soon was speaking regularly to women about the subject. These lectures led to her first mediated communications activities when she was invited to write articles for the leading New York socialist newspaper, *The Call.* These first articles were titled, *What Every Mother Should Know, and* used modest sex life examples of birds, bees, and humans to provide guidelines for mothers in explaining the bodily functions to children (Coigney, 1969, p. 50). On November 17, 1912, a new series of articles, entitled, *What Every Girl Should Know,* began and ran for twelve weeks. These articles were designed to change women's attitudes about sex, calling on women to see the procreative act as natural and healthful (Lader, 1955, p. 36).

This publishing experience put Sanger and *The Call* in conflict with Anthony Comstock and his repressive law. Comstock was the Secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice and he pushed through Congress a few hours before adjournment in 1873 the censorship law which bore his name (Lader, 1955, p. 36). Comstock and the Post Office Department moved to suspend publication of Sanger's articles by threatening to revoke *The Call's* mailing permit. "On February 9, 1913, the left-hand column of the woman's page was left completely blank except for the words: 'What Every Girl Should Know. NOTHING! By order of the Post Office

Department'" (Lader, 1955, p. 37). However, Sanger continued to gain experience in publicity methods by writing additional, non-censored, articles for *The Call* on health issues and problems of labor and the conditions of the working class.

At the same time, her nursing experiences continued in New York City with poor, working class women whose health was ravaged by multiple births and complications from self-abortions. These experiences and her growing frustration with the lack of solutions for these women motivated her to do research into contraceptive methods both in the United States and Europe. "What I desired was merely a simple method of contraception for the poor" (Sanger, 1938, p. 94).

She would be frustrated in her research and find that the Comstock law had significantly repressed information. She spent countless hours in libraries searching for information on contraception to use to educate women, but could find no practical data. Sanger (1931) wrote:

> I had visited the Library of Congress in Washington, I had pored over books in the library of the New York Academy of Medicine and in the Boston Public Library, to find only information no more reliable than that already obtainable from 'back fence gossip' in any small town. (p. 60)

She also sought information directly from doctors and druggists but got nowhere. "It was obvious that the visage of Anthony Comstock had cast its dread shadow over the land" (Lader, 1955, p. 48).

In October 1913 she expanded her research efforts to Europe, where she traveled to Scotland, France and Holland seeking contraceptive information. In France, the small size of working class families provided evidence of family planning. Sanger noted, "Each woman had her own little formula passed on to her by her mother, who in turn had received it from her mother" (quoted in Coigney, 1969, p. 65).

Sanger returned to the United States on December 31, 1913 with valuable data, new motivation, and specific written concepts for her campaign to inform women about reproductive choices.

The base of public support for the campaign would not come from other cause campaigns. This was the period in American history of the women's suffrage movement, and while an alliance with it seemed logical, Sanger's campaign was too radical. "Margaret lost the support of the feminist leaders when she suggested that the basis for feminism might well be the right to be a mother regardless of Church or State" (Coigney, 1969, p. 67).

Her initial campaign strategy was to increase awareness of the contraceptive issue among working women to gain their support for open distribution of information. An important element of this public relations strategy was to establish a campaign name, or slogan, to give it a unifying identity. A brainstorming session with friends in early 1914 resulted in the campaign slogan, "Birth Control" (Sanger, 1938, p. 108).

This done, she initiated the first significant mediated communication tactic to support the strategy of raising awareness of contraception among working women. "To this end I conceived the idea of a magazine to be called the *Woman Rebel*" (Sanger, 1938, p. 106). The first issue appeared in March 1914. Besides providing a central voice for the campaign, Sanger had another objective for the publication which was to confront the Comstock law's restrictions on freedom of expression regarding contraception. Sanger's struggle to overcome information restrictions was a dominant campaign objective and the focus of many of her strategies and tactics. Sanger wrote, "At the time, I visualized the Birth Control movement as part of the fight for freedom of speech" (Sanger, 1938, p. 113).

The *Woman Rebel* was not only a direct attack on the Comstock law but was aimed at being an inspiration for women's freedom (Lader, 1955). Sanger challenged women, "To look the world in the face with a go-to-hell look in the eyes; to have an idea; to speak and act in defiance of convention" (Sanger, 1938, p. 110).

It was now apparent that the Birth Control Campaign would aggressively oppose social norms and struggle against the institutions of law, politics, religion, and medicine to accomplish its goals. This opposing social position was noted by Sanger. "We advocated direct action and took up the burning questions of the day. With a fine sense of irony we put anti-capitalist soapbox oratory in print" (Sanger, 1938, p. 110). She believed that a revolution was building in women's expectations about themselves and this was demonstrated in the demand for the vote. But Sanger believed that suffrage had little appeal to the working woman, that these women longed for more basic freedoms (Reed, 1983).

The first issue of the *Woman Rebel* publicly attacked Comstock, promised to break the law by publishing contraceptive information and emphasized the right of women to have control over their bodies (Topalian, 1984). In only a few weeks the Post Office responded. The notice read: "Dear Madam, You are hereby notified that the Solicitor of the Post Office Department has decided that the *Woman Rebel* for March, 1914, is unmailable under Section 489, Postal Laws and Regulations" (quoted in Sanger, 1938, p. 110). The message was clear; the Post Office would apply the Comstock law and censor the *Woman Rebel* by refusing to deliver it. This would lead to the courtroom confrontation with the Comstock law that Sanger sought.

As part of her arsenal of public relations-type tactics to inform working women about Birth Control, Sanger prepared other publications. For example, she worked hard under self-imposed deadlines to produce the pamphlet, *Family Limitation,* which was designed to give women specific, practical contraceptive information, and went much further than the *Woman Rebel,* which only threatened to distribute information. Initially, 100,000 copies of *Family Limitation* were printed secretly and stored for later distribution in several major cities across the country

(Topalian, 1984, p. 51). Distribution of specific contraceptive information was also in direct violation of the Comstock law, but *Family Limitation* would eventually become the bible of the birth control movement. It would be translated into thirteen languages and ten million copies would be printed over several years (Lader, 1955, p. 56).

Following the August 1914 issue of the *Woman Rebel*, the federal government indicted Sanger for violation of the postal code. When a delay in her trial was denied, she avoided the legal system temporarily by sailing for Europe in October 1914. She sent a message from the ship to her friends instructing them to distribute *Family Limitation* in a dozen U. S. cities (Reed, 1983, p. 88).

This second trip to Europe also was an important period of research for the Birth Control Campaign. In addition to finding better contraceptive devices, she discovered new methods of reform, and gained important friends and contributors (Reed, 1983). Her experiences in Europe would help her refine the strategies of the campaign from primarily mediated communication to also include both interpersonal communication and direct application of birth control methods by the medical profession. "Once she had broken through the wall of ignorance in the courts, in the press, in society, the long-range campaign for birth control would have to be brought to America through the clinic and the doctor" (Lader, 1955, p. 78).

She returned to the United States in October 1915 prepared to expand her Birth Control Campaign strategies and to face trial for violating the Comstock law. Her court appearance was set for January 18, 1916 (Topalian, 1984). Press coverage of her case grew with several court delays and there was an outpouring of support in the form of letters, telegrams, and courtroom attendance. The court finally dismissed the two-year-old charges and Sanger credited her victory to the power of public opinion and active protest (Topalian, 1984).

Because of the dismissal the law was not tested in court. But the front page press coverage made the entire country aware of the Birth Control Campaign and made Sanger a visible figure. This new public exposure via the media made her a sought after speaker from coast to coast. She seized this opportunity to use interpersonal communication methods to spread the word about contraception and gain additional exposure for the Birth Control Campaign in the news media which extended the reach of her message and gave it more prestige. Lader (1955) notes, "Her meetings had attracted such attention that the press was forced to give her regular front-page space. In three and a half months, she had made birth control one of the most fervently debated issues of the day" (p. 104).

While making this speaking tour in the spring of 1916 she was also developing plans for opening birth control clinics, her next important strategy (Topalian, 1984). Sanger recognized the slow process of waiting for legislation to change laws regarding distribution of contraceptive information. Her strategy was to confront the laws in court by opening a clinic that would distribute birth control information and establish a model for future clinics. Sanger (1931) wrote:

> My object is to establish Free Clinics in the various industrial districts throughout the United States, where a poor woman can go to be instructed in the methods to prevent conception and thereby preserve her health and enable her to care for the children to whom she has already given birth. (p. 141)

The site selected for the first clinic was the Brownsville Section of Brooklyn. To publicize the new clinic 5,000 flyers were printed in three languages and distributed by hand in the surrounding area. On the morning of October 16, 1916 the doors opened to the first birth control clinic anywhere in the world outside of the

Netherlands (Sanger, 1938, p. 215-216). Sanger had a clear understanding of the needs of her audience as indicated by the response to the clinic. It served 140 women the first day and after nine days nearly 500 women had come to the clinic. On the tenth day the authorities closed the clinic and arrested Sanger, her sister and an assistant. The opening of the clinic and its subsequent closing contributed to Sanger's campaign in two ways: it brought additional national media attention and allowed her to challenge the law directly in court (Topalian, 1984, p. 72).

The trials began in January 1917 and her sister was convicted first and sentenced to 30 days in prison where she went on a hunger strike, which brought massive amounts of publicity to the cause. Sanger (1931) noted, "Newspapers which previously had ignored the case, had to mention a matter important enough to bring the Governor from Albany to New York City" (p. 168). When Margaret Sanger was tried a few weeks later, photographers and news reporters turned out in large numbers to focus increased national publicity on the Birth Control Campaign (Sanger, 1931).

She lost her trial and served 30 days in prison but the court decision was appealed for the purpose of removing or easing the law regarding distribution of birth control information. She used her prison time to further adjust and modify her campaign strategies. Her experiences continued to confirm the need to do more than just raise awareness about contraception. In her autobiography, Sanger (1938) noted the public relations-type strategies that her Birth Control Campaign would take in the future:

> Heretofore there had been much notoriety and but little understanding. The next three steps were to be: first, education; then, organization; and, finally, legislation. All were clearly differentiated, though they necessarily overlapped to a certain extent. . . . The public had to be educated before it

> could be organized and before the laws could be changed as a result of that organization. (p. 251)

Through her experiences Sanger learned the difficulties of getting the establishment press to publish oppositional information such as the Birth Control Campaign presented. "The press did not want articles stating the facts of birth control; they wanted news, and to them news still consisted of fights, police, arrests, controversy" (Sanger, 1938, p. 251). As a result, she launched some new communication tactics to deliver the birth control message. First, she produced an inexpensive movie, "The Hand That Rocks The Cradle," where she played the lead and simply acted out her earlier experiences as a nurse in New York City. However, authorities quickly banned the film when they discovered the words 'birth control" were used (Topalian, 1984, p. 80).

The most important new communications method she created was the *Birth Control Review* magazine in February, 1917. This publication was the official publication for the Birth Control Campaign for the next 23 years. Contrasted with the explosiveness and short life of the earlier *Woman Rebel,* the acceptance and longevity of the *Review* illustrated how well the movement had developed along educational, organizational and scientific medical lines (Lader, 1955).

While Sanger busied herself with new campaign strategies and mediated communications tactics, the appeal of the Brownsville clinic legal decision continued to move slowly through the court system. Finally in January 1918 the highest New York state appeals court arrived at a decision that upheld Sanger's conviction, but the court decision was so broad that it delivered many of the Birth Control Campaign's objectives for which she had been fighting (Lader, 1955). The court decision expanded the scope of contraceptive medical advice allowing doctors to provide information that would go beyond just preventing syphilis or gonorrhea.

Distribution of contraceptive information could be based on a much broader definition of disease (Sanger, 1931).

While the court decision represented some progress, Sanger was not satisfied with the more liberal legal interpretation of the law. She wanted birth control to be available for social and economic reasons. As a result, she set out to change the law by implementing her campaign strategy of influencing legislation. "It was not only a question of amending it, but also a means of educating the public, of explaining our cause through the medium of legislation" (Sanger, 1938, p. 292). Her efforts to amend legislation would meet with numerous disappointments over the years at both the state and national levels, but she never ceased her efforts to implement this campaign strategy.

In addition to legislative activities, the growing public visibility for the Birth Control Campaign brought increasing requests for Sanger to speak, debate and write articles as the decade of the 1920s began. She also was busy developing strategies for a national organization and conference.

An important part of any public relations campaign is to monitor ongoing activities with research so that modifications and adjustments can be made. To determine the need for a national organization Sanger initiated more research. Sanger (1931) wrote:

> During the spring and summer of 1921, I sent out a questionnaire to the principal and influential leaders in social and professional circles, asking if the time had not come for a national organization which should represent the birth control movement as advanced by the principles promulgated in my books, lectures, and writings. (p. 211)

Understanding the importance of recruiting public opinion support, Sanger (1938) said the purpose of the planned organization was:

> To build up public opinion so that women should demand instruction from doctors, to assemble the findings of scientists, to remove hampering Federal statutes, to send out field workers into those states where laws did not prevent clinics, to co-operate with similar bodies in studying population problems, food supplies, and world peace. (p. 300)

The value of this organizing effort is noted by Center and Jackson (1990): "Important punctuations of the birth control crusade came at the structural and public affairs levels" (p. 239). Sanger, along with friends, organized the American Birth Control League on the eve of the first birth control conference in November 1921. The League brought added credibility and direction to the Birth Control Campaign, aided in the effort to focus public opinion, and was invaluable in fund raising efforts. Its success grew and later the name became Planned Parenthood Federation of America (Topalian, 1984).

The League's first conference on November 11-13, 1921 in New York City experienced problems. The local police, at the urging of Catholic Church officials, attempted to close the final conference session, "Birth Control: Is It Moral?" However, this repression brought valuable freedom of expression support from the nation's establishment press. In fact, the conference, which was receiving limited press, was suddenly national news. Sanger (1931) noted the results for the Birth Control Campaign:

> The clumsy and illegal tactics of our religious opponents broadcast to the whole country what we were doing. Even the most conservative American

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> newspapers were placed in the trying position of defending birth control advocates or endorsing a violation of the principle of freedom of speech. (p. 220)

The discussion of birth control was extended across the country in the form of symposiums, editorials and letters from readers. The *New York Evening World* wrote, "The issue. . . is bigger than the right to advocate birth control. It is part of the eternal fight for free speech, free assembly and democratic government. It is a principle which must always find defenders if democracy is to survive" (quoted in Sanger, 1931, p. 220).

The increased national visibility for the Birth Control Campaign was matched by Sanger's drive to expand the campaign both nationally and internationally. She renewed her efforts to open the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau. This action contributed to her strategy of promoting birth control from a scientific and medical basis. The Bureau opened in January 1923 on Fifth Avenue in New York City and was the first research center on sex in married life. The clinic kept detailed records on patients to build a record of scientific medical information (Topalian, 1984, p. 98).

She also organized an International Birth Control Conference in New York in March 1925. The Conference attracted 800 delegates from 18 countries and it marked the first time an international meeting on the subject of population had taken place in the United States (Topalian, 1984, p. 102). In her preparations Sanger demonstrated an understanding of the elements of persuasion important to public relations-type strategies. Sanger (1938) noted:

> The success of any conference was determined in great measure by the caliber of the people who took part in it. Results depended first upon the concept animating it, and second, as had been proved before, on the presence of an eminent figure to ornament the assemblage. (p. 370)

Momentum for the Birth Control Campaign continued building in terms of organization, education, and legislation through the remainder of the 1920s and the 1930s. Clinics opened in other major cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland and San Francisco. In 1927, Sanger organized the first World Population Conference in Geneva, and the first international birth control organization was formed (Coigney, 1969). In 1930, she became president of the Birth Control International Information Centers in London, a post she held until 1936. It was set up to provide a center of contact for people in various countries interested in birth control (Sanger, 1938. p. 461).

One of Sanger's last major public affairs battles was aimed at the total elimination of the Comstock law so that doctors and hospitals could send birth control information and devices through the mail to patients. For this purpose she traveled widely holding regional conferences to educate the public on the necessity of changing federal laws. In 1931, with the help of friends, she established a lobbying organization, the National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control, in Washington, D. C. (Sanger, 1938).

Sanger learned through her frustrating direct lobbying activity with Congress that grass roots lobbying also was an important and necessary public affairs tool in changing legislation. Sanger (1938) wrote, "congressmen paid little attention to abstract arguments, logic, or the humanitarian needs of outsiders. But they could be reached through their constituents. One way of doing this was to get women 'back home' to help themselves directly by writing letters" (p. 422).

The courts would ultimately change the Comstock law. In 1936 a pending case received a favorable ruling that allowed a doctor to receive a package of contraceptive devices through the mail. A higher court upheld the decision and the government stopped the appeals. The decision changed the Comstock legislation enacted in 1873 restricting delivery of birth control information and devices and gave doctors the legitimate use of scientific contraceptive methods (Lader, 1955, p. 302).

Measurable success for the Birth Control Campaign continued on several fronts as birth control became accepted among mainstream institutions. State medical groups passed resolutions supporting birth control, while many educational, civic and religious groups were endorsing family planning during the 1930s. Significantly, on June 10, 1937, the American Medical Association endorsed birth control. The AMA resolved that all doctors should be given information about their legal rights regarding dispensation of contraceptives and that studies should be initiated on new contraceptive techniques and how best to educate the public (Topalian, 1984, p. 112).

Sanger saw the AMA endorsement as a definitive indication that objectives had been reached. Sanger (1938) wrote:

> Here was the culmination of unremitting labor ever since my return from Europe in 1915, the gratification of seeing a dream come true. These specific achievements are significant because they open the way to a broader field of attainment and to research which can immeasurably improve methods now known, making possible the spread of birth control into the forlorn, overpopulated places of the earth, and permitting science eventually to determine the potentialities of posterity conceived and born of conscious love. (p. 430)

The expansion of birth control clinics was another measure of the success of the Birth Control Campaign. In 1930 there were 55 clinics operating in twelve states but by 1938 there were more than 300 clinics disseminating birth control information in the country (Topalian, 1984, p. 100). In 1939, the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau and the Birth Control League merged into the Birth Control Federation of America and in 1942 it was renamed the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (Topalian, 1984, p. 113). In 1993 the Federation had 922 clinics in 49 states (Planned Parenthood Letter, 1993).

The measurable results of Sanger's Birth Control Campaign would continue as, in 1942, the U. S. Public Health Service adopted a policy of responding to requests from states for financial assistance for birth control programs. By 1947, a nationwide poll of American physicians showed them overwhelmingly in favor of birth control. In 1952, Sanger helped form the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and in 1959 the American Public Health Association endorsed birth control (Coigney, 1969, pp. 184-185).

Conclusion

Sanger's public relations-style Birth Control Campaign had major historical significance. The social change the campaign brought in the United States over a few decades was so massive and decisive that most Americans today take birth control as much for granted as if it were part of the Bill of Rights.

The American Women's Association was the first national women's group to honor Margaret Sanger officially with its medal of achievement. The association's 1931 citation says:

> She has fought a battle against almost every influence which in the past was considered necessary to the success of a cause. Against her stood the state, the church, the schools, the press and society. She has fought that battle single-handed . . . a pioneer of pioneers.

> She has carried her cause without remuneration or personal reward other than poverty, condemnation and ostracism . . . She has changed and is changing the entire social structure of our world. She has opened the doors of knowledge and thereby given light, freedom and happiness to thousands caught in the tragic meshes of ignorance. She is remaking the world. (quoted in Lader, 1955, pp. 277-278)

Halberstam (1993) summarizes Sanger's achievements:

> For most of her life Sanger had been on the radical fringe, constantly living with harassment and the threat of jail. But after forty years of leading the struggle, her ideas on sexual hygiene and population control had moved so much into the main stream of social opinion that she was even featured in *Reader's Digest*, the bible of middle class America. (p. 283)

The Birth Control Campaign set out to achieve stated objectives based on various methods of research. The efforts to achieve the campaign objectives, which resulted in historical social results, involved public relations-type methods of identifying and targeting specific audiences; gauging public opinion; devising and modifying strategies of organization, education, legislation and communication; and using both mediated and interpersonal communications tactics.

By stepping beyond the traditional boundaries of twentieth-century public relations history to examine the Birth Control Campaign this study argues for broader boundaries thus giving the public relations field greater historical value and social credibility.

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"AIDS and the Gay Press: Uncovering or Covering Up?"

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This paper examines the role the gay press played in early reporting on the AIDS epidemic between 1981 and 1983. More specifically, it documents that the earliest articles about this medical crisis appeared not in the titans of American journalism but in gay newspapers.

This study traces the early coverage of medical, public policy, and legal dimensions of the disease. It also criticizes the three gay newspapers in San Francisco for failing to serve their readers.

Gay newspapers praised in the study are the *New York Native*, *Washington Blade*, and *Gay Community News* in Boston. Those newspapers that are criticized are *The Advocate*, the *San Francisco Sentinel*, and the *Bay Area Reporter*.

AIDS and the Gay Press: Uncovering or Covering Up?

For most gay men, the summer of 1981 unfolded like the carefree season they had come to expect summer to be. In June, *The Advocate*, the largest gay publication in the country, reported that bodybuilding had emerged as the pastime of choice among gay men, with bulging biceps becoming a far stronger sign of a man's homosexuality than limp wrists had ever been. The magazine announced: "Aspiring hunks can be seen walking around San Francisco with their gym bags -- now a *de rigueur* piece of gay equipment -- either going to or coming from their daily workout."[1] The men were firming up their muscles so they could pose with appropriate attitude at the bath houses that had mushroomed into a $100 million industry centered in gay Valhalla.[2]

Amid such rituals of a hedonistic summer, most gay men were unaware that a murderer was in their midst. And when the first alarm was sounded, it did not appear in any of the leading mainstream journalistic voices in America's gay meccas. For the first articles appeared neither in the *New York Times* nor the *Los Angeles Times* nor the *San Francisco Chronicle* or *Examiner*. That distinction rightly belongs to a gay bi-weekly that had a circulation of only 20,000 and that had existed for less than half a year: the *New York Native*.[3]

As AIDS quickly demonstrated that it would not be merely a medical phenomenon, other gay newspapers distinguished themselves as well. The *Washington Blade*, for example, took advantage of its location in the nation's capital to focus on the public policy issues that soon surrounded the disease,[4] and *Gay Community News* in Boston paid particular attention to AIDS legal disputes.[5]

Not all gay papers, however, served their readers. By the early 1980s, three gay voices were publishing in San Francisco, and yet none paid attention to the AIDS epidemic. *The Advocate*, the *San Francisco Sentinel*, and the *Bay Area Reporter* all opted to deny the existence of a crisis, ignoring the concerns being raised by the medical community.[6] The papers opted *not* to sound the alarm, tacitly allowing thousands of gay men to die.

At the same time, it is difficult to indict the papers. Information about how AIDS was being spread was uncertain, and, after years of enduring government-sanctioned discrimination, gay Americans had good reason to be skeptical of the motives of public health officials and government-supported researchers. George Mendenhall, who reported for the *Bay Area Reporter* in the early 1980s, said a decade later: "You look back at those days from where we are today, and everything seems black and white. But at the time, there was a helluva lot of gray -- uncertainty, skepticism, rumors. Guys looked to the papers for answers, but we didn't know either." Mendenhall continued: "Reassurance is part of what the institution of journalism is supposed to offer its community. We wanted to give readers some hope."[7]

Randy Shilts, however, had no difficulty making an indictment. The gay journalist who wrote the book, *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic* as the definitive study of America's bungled response to the epidemic,[8] said: "San Francisco's newspapers had what every journalistic institution prays for: the opportunity to save lives. It was the one time in history when the gay press could have proven its mettle once and for all. But it performed miserably. The newspapers in the most important gay city in the country sold out to the almighty buck. The men who made that decision will, unquestionably, burn in Hell."[9]

This paper examines the role the gay press played in early reporting on the AIDS epidemic between 1981 and 1983. More specifically, it documents that the earliest articles appeared not in the titans of American journalism but in gay newspapers. This study traces the early coverage of medical, public policy, and legal dimensions of the disease. It also criticizes the three gay newspapers in San Francisco for failing to serve their readers.

Taking the Lead in AIDS Medical Coverage

With a daily circulation of 900,000, a Sunday circulation of 1.5 million, and a staff of 7,300, the *New York Times* in 1981 was equipped to cover the globe like no other organization in the history of communication. Despite its enormous resources, however, the *Times* was *not* the first newspaper to report the existence of acquired immune deficiency syndrome, even though early cases were concentrated in New York.

The newspaper that published the first article on a mysterious new disease attacking gay men was the *New York Native*. Founded in December 1980, the bi-weekly tabloid blended news, entertainment, and erotica. Publisher Charles Ortleb conceived of the *Native* as a gay *Village Voice*. In the *Native*'s first issue, Ortleb said: "We've decided to throw ourselves onto newsprint with a vengeance." A mere five months after its birth, the *Native* delivered on that promise, breaking the biggest story in the history Gay America.[10]

The *Native*'s pioneering AIDS coverage was the effort of Dr. Lawrence Mass, the first physician to write regularly for the gay press. Mass received the tip for his first article from a friend who had gone to his doctor to be treated for a venereal disease and overheard the doctor talking about an unusually large number of gay men being in the intensive care unit of a New York hospital. The friend called Mass that night. "The rumors were very disturbing," Mass recently recalled. "I knew that they had to be looked into. I had to find out what was going on."[11]

Mass's ground-breaking article appeared in May 1981. The seven-inch piece stated: "Last week there were rumors that an exotic new disease had hit the gay community in New York." The article was of singular importance because it alerted gay New York -- where the disease would do half its killing for the next two years -- that an evil phenomenon was lurking in its midst. The gay grapevine quickly spread the story through the local community.[12]

That first story appeared in the *New York Native* a month before any mainstream newspaper mentioned the disease. The *San Francisco Chronicle* published its first story in June.[13] The *New York Times*, widely recognized as the country's newspaper of record, published its first story in July.[14]

New York City's gay voice remained far ahead of the *Times* in

July 1981 when it pushed "gay cancer," as the disease was labeled, to page one.[15] The *Times* would not give the disease that much prominence for another two years.[16]

The *Native*'s July headline bluntly announced: "Cancer in the Gay Community." Mass's lead pulled no punches either, stating, "Sexually active gay males in several urban centers are currently manifesting a striking, group-specific vulnerability to a relatively rare cancer called Kaposi's Sarcoma." The *Native*'s blockbuster article ran for an exhaustive 170 column inches, allowing room for a question-and-answer interview with Dr. Alvin E. Friedman-Kien of New York University Medical Center as well as two close-up photos of cancerous lesions designed not only to show readers what to look for, but also to scare them.[17]

Even more important was that the *Native* informed readers what experts suspected regarding how the deadly disease was being spread. To save the lives of its readers, the *Native* -- unlike the stodgy *Times* -- did not hesitate to use graphic sexual terms. In its July article, the *Native* told readers "traumatic sex" such as anal intercourse caused microscopic cuts believed to play a major role in the rapid spread of the disease.[18] For a gay paper to challenge this sacrosanct sexual activity was bold and courageous.

As Mass began to realize, by the winter of 1982, that the disease might decimate the gay male population, he became concerned the *Native*'s limited circulation meant only a fraction of the country's gay men were reading about the health crisis. Initially, Mass hoped to use the country's newspaper of record to disseminate the profoundly important information. He recently recalled: "But the *New York Times* during that period was totally homophobic. When I talked to the chief medical writer, he told me the *Times* did not cover the gay community because it was not an advocacy journal."[19]

Mass next contacted the city's major alternative publication, the *Village Voice*, which had a large gay readership. Although the *Voice* agreed to commission Mass to write an article, it ultimately rejected the story. "The editor, Karen Durbin, told me, 'It's not a *Voice* piece,'" Mass recalled. "In other words, the dry writing style of a physician did not have sufficient pizzazz, even if it could have saved people's lives."[20]

Mass, who received no payment for his work in the *Native*, was even more disturbed by the rebuff he received from the gay press. After he wrote a question-and-answer piece about the epidemic for the *Native* in June 1982, he persuaded Ortleb to let him try to publish it in *The Advocate*. Mass offered the article for free, but the largest gay publication in the country would have none of it. Mass recalled: "Even when it was clear there was something quite horrible happening to the gay community, *The Advocate* insisted upon distancing itself from the emerging epidemic. They didn't want to publish bad news, for fear of losing readers."[21]

By the end of 1982, the disease had spread to 900 Americans. *Native* coverage totaled fifty-eight articles measuring 2,506 column inches. And yet, by that same point, the *New York Times* had published only seven articles measuring 126 inches. The *Times* was not always so timid about covering medical crises -- at least not those affecting straight people. After cyanide was found in Tylenol pain relief capsules on October 1, 1982, the *Times* ran a story every day that month and two dozen more the next month, even though only seven people had died.[22]

Nevertheless, early analysis of AIDS reportage ignored the contributions of the gay press. When a journalism professor published the first comprehensive study of AIDS and the media in *The Quill*, the journal of the Society for Professional Journalists, he looked at the reporting by dozens of newspapers, magazines, television networks, and local radio and television stations, but he did not so much as mention the gay press.[23]

Media critics who looked at the gay press, on the other hand, praised the *Native*. In 1983 when the *Washington Blade* assessed how gay publications were covering AIDS, it lauded the *Native*: "With its encyclopedic accounts of new developments in the health crisis, the *Native* has set the pace for the rest of the Gay press -- and the straight media -- on the most important Gay-related story of the 1980s."[24] Randy Shilts agreed: "The *Native's* coverage was exceptional. By the end of 1981 when even the biggest news organizations in the country -- *New York Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek* -- were just starting to see AIDS as a story, the *Native* was bursting with stories about every aspect of the disease."[25]

Shilts was not complimentary, however, of gay press coverage in the other AIDS killing field. The journalist said: "Throughout 1981 and 1982, the gay community in New York was far better informed about the disease than San Francisco was. All the West

Coast papers did was reprint excerpts from Mass's articles -- when they bothered to print anything at all."[26]

The three San Francisco gay papers were in a much better position to respond to a major health crisis than was their nascent New York counterpart. But *The Advocate*, whose 80,000 circulation was more than triple that of any other gay publication in the country, pooh-poohed the disease. *The Advocate's* first article, three paragraphs on page twelve, said the new form of pneumonia -- described as "supposedly" attacking gay men -- had been around since World War II.[27] Shilts said: "*The Advocate* was not sure what to say about AIDS, and so wrote virtually nothing at all about it until after the subject was picked up by the mainstream press."[28]

Bay Area Reporter, as the second largest gay publication in the country and having been published for a full decade, should have been poised to commit itself to responsible journalism, but a new editor opted for sensationalism. Paul Lorch wrote that he considered his paper a gay *National Enquirer*. He said: "The *Bay Area Reporter* was never founded to compete with the *Christian Science Monitor*. To be labeled a 'sleazy rag' has never bothered me; it has always been a given."[29]

San Francisco's third gay voice, the *Sentinel*, also decided not to place the disease on its news agenda. Shilts said: "The *Sentinel* wasn't about to jeopardize its support in the community or its advertising base by giving readers bad news."[30]

Debating the Ethics: Give Me Liberation *and* Give Me Death?

For many gay men in the early 1980s, liberation was synonymous with promiscuity. And when men thought of sexual abandon, they thought of San Francisco. They reveled in the dozens of bath houses, grope rooms, and porn theaters that had proliferated in response to the demands for a cult of ecstasy.

Nevertheless, by July 1981 the *New York Native* was reporting the connection between sex and the disease that later became known as AIDS. As coverage evolved, health experts expressed increasing alarm that the gay male propensity for multiple sex partners placed them at high risk and, therefore, jeopardized their lives. And yet gay activists who had won the battle to be allowed to socialize together -- replacing dingy 1950s bars with the comfortable, well-lighted bath houses of the 1980s -- were not eager to take what they saw as a major step backward by shunning either the businesses or the behavior that had come to define their liberation.

Gay newspapers had even more to lose. For as the bath house industry had mushroomed in the late 1970s, it had provided newspapers -- particularly those in San Francisco -- with the financial stability that had long eluded the gay press. *The Advocate*, which was distributed far beyond the Bay Area, carried many national ads as well, but the *Sentinel* and *Bay Area Reporter* depended on the bath houses. Club San Francisco's most frequent ad featured a man wearing only cowboy boots as another man sucked his penis; the advertising copy above the image read: "Love it." The Watergarden promoted its offerings with an ad dominated by a photo of a man's buttocks as he thrust his penis into the anus of another man. Liberty Baths opted for images of very handsome, very young men frolicking with each other while wrapped in skimpy towels.

George Mendenhall of *Bay Area Reporter* recalled: "The tubs weren't just part of the culture -- they *were* the culture. To a large extent, they defined what the gay press was, too. We saw banning sex in the tubs as, with one stroke, losing everything Stonewall did for us. It meant, at the same time, pushing the gay press back twenty years to the time when we were operating hand-to-mouth. No way we'd let that happen. No way in Hell."[31]

By early 1982, the medical community was describing the baths as death camps. In a front-page article in March, the *New York Native* stated: "It's probable that sexually transmitted diseases that may be related to the current epidemic are being spread *at* the baths, but not *because* of the baths per se."[32] The *Native* campaigned, therefore, not for sex to be banned from the baths or for the bath houses to be closed, but for gay men to act responsibly by not being promiscuous and not engaging in sexual activity with new partners unless they used condoms -- in the baths or anywhere else.

San Francisco papers, on the other hand, continued to promote the sexual abandon of the baths. The *Sentinel* ridiculed the medical research being conducted. As an April Fool's joke, it published a lead story that played off many gay men's fondness for brunch. The headline read "BRUNCH CAUSES 'GAY CANCER,'" and the story began: "Scientists seeking to identify the elusive element of the gay lifestyle that causes 'gay cancer' have named gay brunch as the culprit."[33]

While trivializing the crisis, the papers also continued to encourage promiscuity. *BAR* -- as *Bay Area Reporter* often is called -- published a series of features highlighting the activities available at the Caldron, one of the paper's most frequent advertisers. A first-person article described the sexual activity available non-stop at the popular bath house: "While Man C is being fucked by Man D and sucked off by man E, Man F places his hand on Man C's left pectoral and starts caressing it. Man C doesn't even look over to see whose hand is touching him. What does he care? It is the experience of raw sexual excitement and sexual pleasure that is of supreme importance."[34]

The campaign of denial continued. *Sentinel* publisher William Beardemphl wrote an editorial, titled "Destroying the Myth of AIDS," that promised his readers: "*The Sentinel* is starting a campaign to clear up misinformation on AIDS." The statements that followed, however, provided textbook examples of distorting the news. Beardemphl's first point -- "The homosexual community is over 99 and 99/100 percent free of AIDS" -- ignored the fact that the Centers for Disease Control estimated for every full-blown case of AIDS, twenty more people were not yet showing symptoms. The publisher's second point -- "AIDS is already being conquered" -- was based on the tendency for many persons with AIDS to go through stages of remission; it ignored the fact that not a single person who had been diagnosed as having AIDS had recovered. His third point -- "AIDS is damn difficult to get" -- was ludicrous, as cases of the disease were doubling every six months.[35]

Because the San Francisco papers systematically denied the realities of a disease that was decimating their community, it was left to the *New York Native* to sound the alarm. One dramatic article came in March 1983. The blockbuster began in street vernacular: "If this article doesn't scare the shit out of you, we're in real trouble. If this article doesn't rouse you to anger, fury, rage, and action, gay men may have no future on this earth. Our continued existence depends on just how angry you can get. Unless we fight for our lives, we shall die."[36]

Larry Kramer's angry broadside spread like wild fire across Gay America. Shilts recalled: "Kramer threw a hand grenade into the foxhole of denial where most gay men had been hiding from the growing epidemic."[37] Mendenhall agreed: "Suddenly, gays talked of nothing else. After that one article in the *Native*, gay phone lines to the West Coast were burning up. No doubt about it -- he got us talking about AIDS."[38]

Kramer constructed "1,112 and Counting" around the soaring death count. But woven into the facts and statistics was a sense of outrage toward the institutions that were failing to respond to the crisis. Kramer lambasted the National Institutes of Health for funding delays, the Centers for Disease Control for an inability to keep pace with the disease, elected officials for lack of commitment, and the *New York Times* for scant coverage.[39]

Kramer attacked the gay press as well. He singled out *The*

Advocate as particularly irresponsible because of its status as the gay publication whose resources best enabled it to report on the disease: "I am sick of the *Advocate*, one of this country's largest gay publications, which has yet to quite acknowledge that there's anything going on." Kramer continued: "With the exception of the *New York Native* and a few, very few, other gay publications, the gay press has been useless."[40]

Kramer's article influenced other publications. For a month after his tirade appeared, *The Advocate* finally broke its silence and quietly suggested, in April 1983, that for gay men engaging in anal intercourse: "Use of condoms may be helpful."[41]

The impact of Kramer's article in San Francisco's other gay papers, ironically, proved to be the opposite of what he had hoped for. In the edition of *BAR* published immediately after Kramer's article appeared, editor Paul Lorch admitted he had chosen to be "sparse" in AIDS coverage and then went on to defend his decision: "Each man owns his own body and the future he plots for it. And he retains ownership of the way he wants to die." That philosophy notwithstanding, Lorch then announced a shift in *BAR*'s reporting: "We've made a very deliberate decision to up the noise level on AIDS and the fatal furies that follow in its wake."[42]

The particular focus of *BAR*'s increased attention, however, dismayed Kramer and many others. For rather than attacking the unrestrained promiscuity of the bath houses, Lorch set his sights on AIDS patients and activists. Two weeks after upping the volume on the disease, Lorch denounced patients as freeloaders and activists as fanatics: "The unscrupulous will line up for the giveaway as readily -- if not more readily -- than the scrupulous. Braying at the government can get quickly tiresome. Already one crowd has *demanded* that the mayor come up with tens of thousands for an AIDS victims' house -- or warehouse -- as would be assumed under the aegis of a crew I wouldn't trust my sick goldfish to. What a wonderful way to secure a prolonged free lunch."[43]

After a month of attacks, twenty-two AIDS patients wrote *BAR* publisher Bob Ross, criticizing Lorch and asking Ross to fire his controversial editor. Their letter read: "This sensational approach to reporting only fuels the fires of fear, guilt, homophobia and adds to the everyday stresses patients must face in dealing with this illness." Lorch decided to respond privately.[44]

But the *Sentinel* had no intention of keeping the issue private. The competing newspaper published both the letter from the AIDS patients and Lorch's private response, both given to the *Sentinel* by one of the patients -- on its front page. In his letter, Lorch was neither contrite nor kind to the dying men. He wrote: "I find your letter a sorry document, for its voice is confused, its intent unsure -- save to do some punishing. Not liking the message, you scapegoat the messenger. What's more, I sense that your experiences have failed in making you bigger men. The letter reveals a reverse trend, a trend toward peevishness. What a time in your lives to be without honor. For most of the names on your list, the only thing you have given to the Gay life is your calamity."[45]

Despite the mean spirit Lorch displayed in his letter, his private behavior was even more reprehensible. For Lorch held onto the letter demanding his termination. Each time one of the men who had signed the letter succumbed to AIDS, Lorch pulled out the letter and drew a line through the dead man's name. One by one, the men disappeared until all twenty-two were dead and Lorch's macabre ritual finally ended.[46]

The *Sentinel* practiced its sensationalism in other ways as well. It began waging an attack not against the disease, but against an organization the community had created to *fight* the disease. The specific organization the *Sentinel* chose was the National AIDS/Kaposi's Sarcoma Foundation -- which *BAR* publisher Bob Ross served as treasurer. The *Sentinel* filled its front page with allegations the foundation had inflated the success of a fund-raising event. The *Sentinel* questioned why $60,000 worth of tickets had been given to AIDS patients and why no receipts had been turned in for $15,000 worth of expenses.[47] The paper's charges were so vociferous the foundation created a committee to investigate them. Even after the committee's three-month investigation cleared the foundation of any wrongdoing, the *Sentinel* still was not satisfied, running an eighty-inch front page story accusing the investigation of having been flawed.[48]

While the dueling newspapers attacked AIDS patients, AIDS organizations, and each other, they continued to support the bath houses and the sex they fostered. *BAR* gave bath house owners news space to defend their operations. One argued against AIDS educational material being distributed in his bath house: "I don't want that going on. People come in here to *forget* what's going on outside." Another said bluntly: "I'm gonna die, I was born to die, and if that's going to be the way, then that's it."[49]

Because the gay press continued to support unrestricted sex at the bath houses did not mean gay men did. Bath house patronage plummeted. The Caldron, Cornholes, Liberty Baths, Sutro Baths, and Bulldog Baths all closed. When the Hothouse went out of business, *Gay Community News* in Boston quoted the owner as saying he had to close down because the fear of AIDS had cut his business in half.[50]

As the newspapers feared, the decline of the bath house phenomenon had a severe impact on them. After consistently publishing sixteen broadsheet pages, the *Sentinel* had, by the summer of 1983, dropped to ten. The situation was similar at the *Bay Area Reporter*. "We were bleeding. Without the ads for the tubs, we weren't sure we'd survive," said *BAR* reporter George Mendenhall. "Our finances were in the toilet."[51]

In April 1984, public health officials stepped into the bath house fracas when San Francisco Health Director Mervyn Silverman announced a ban on all sexual activity in the baths. Silverman said the businesses were so hazardous to the physical well being of gay men that health inspectors would monitor activities at the baths, much as they monitored sanitary conditions at restaurants, and any business violating the sex ban would be closed.[52]

The San Francisco gay press screamed murder. In an editorial labeled "Killing the Movement," *BAR*'s Lorch lambasted gay leaders who supported the ban, saying they "gave the green light to the annihilation of Gay life. This group empowered government forces to enter our private precincts and rule over and regulate our sex lives."[53] *The Advocate* also denounced the gay leaders who supported banning sex in the baths: "A significant number of gay men and lesbians acted to urge their city to make criminals of some of their own people."[54]

There were indications the gay papers had lost touch with their readers. When activists who were outraged by the public health restrictions attempted to organize a mass protest, they discovered many gay men supported the sex ban. At the appointed time of the protest, the marchers totaled only twenty-two.[55] Two months later, *BAR* publisher Bob Ross replaced Lorch.[56]

Illuminating Public Policy Issues

As AIDS became a major medical crisis initially fixating on a stigmatized minority group, it raised complex public policy issues. Most of the issues were debated in the nation's capital, which was home to a strong, highly professional gay newspaper.

By the early 1980s, the *Washington Blade* had matured into one of the finest gay papers in the country. Beneath its flag, the *Blade* promised readers "Straight facts, Gay news," and it consistently fulfilled that pledge. A mainstream journalism critic who assessed the gay press in 1983 wrote: "The *Blade* knows how to report and write the news. Its news columns are filled with objective accounts of the week's gay-related developments, written by skilled reporters."[57] By developing a clean, well-designed appearance and refusing to publish homoerotic ads, the *Blade* also had the look and feel of a journalistic institution -- which, after fifteen years of publishing, it was.

The *Blade* became known for its ability to obtain inside information from confidential government sources, including many closeted gays. That reputation began after a San Francisco baby received a blood transfusion and then developed an immune deficiency disease in December 1982. The widely-reported incident prompted concern that the nation's entire blood supply might be contaminated.[58]

In late January, the *Blade* scooped the titans of daily journalism by reporting federal health officials would ask gay men to refrain from donating blood. Neither the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *New York Times*, nor *Washington Post* reported such a policy was being contemplated. In fact, the papers never even mentioned the voluntary policy until the U.S. Public Health Service released an official statement weeks later.[59]

The case of the San Francisco baby also documented AIDS no longer could be labeled "gay" cancer. With that reality, mainstream media suddenly became interested in the disease. In the last three months of 1982, the nation's major newspapers and news magazines published only forty stories on the disease; in the first three months of 1983, that figure quadrupled -- jumping to 169 stories. And in the next three months, the figure quadrupled yet again -- this time to 680 stories.[60]

But even when AIDS finally began to receive the coverage a major health crisis merited, the *Blade* continued to beat the country's leading news outlets. When the newspaper wanted to publish up-to-the-minute information on research funding, it initially ran into a brick wall because National Institutes of Health policy precluded releasing any information about the funding of grant proposals until final details had been approved. The *Blade* was not willing to wait. The paper quoted unidentified sources who provided information about the $7 million in grants that would be approved -- information not publicly announced for another two months.[61]

Time and time again, the *Blade* scooped the country's leading news organizations. That Rep. Henry Waxman was drafting legislation designed to speed AIDS research grant proposals through the federal bureaucracy first appeared in the *Blade*.[62] So did the fact the Centers for Disease Control was designing a mechanism to guarantee anonymity for persons being tested for the AIDS virus.[63] And so also did the fact a House of Representatives report was about to blast the federal response to AIDS.[64] In each case, the *Blade* transformed the information into front-page news before the stories broke in the *Chronicle*, *Times*, or *Post*.

The Washington gay weekly's biggest coup came in July 1984. By that time, the mainstream news media were providing daily coverage of the AIDS epidemic. And yet, when Assistant U.S. Secretary for Health Edward Brandt, the nation's highest health official, sent Heckler a memo recommending the recent breakthroughs called for AIDS funding for the year to be jacked up another $20 million, readers first learned the news not in the *Washington Post* but the *Washington Blade.*[65] Although there was considerable disagreement among Washington insiders as to who leaked the memo to the *Blade* -- it was Tim Westmoreland, chief counsel to the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment -- no one questioned that making the memo public successfully pressured Heckler to approve the supplemental appropriation.

Fighting AIDS Legal Issues

With AIDS, legal issues erupted as soon as mainstream media began covering the disease -- and contributing to AIDS hysteria. Much of the early coverage was sensationalized. One of the worst chapters in that coverage came in May 1983 when the *Journal of the American Medical Association* wrote that AIDS could be transmitted through routine household contact. The *Journal* overstated the likelihood of such transmission, possibly because the editors were frustrated at repeatedly being in the shadows of other scientific journals. But regardless of who was responsible for the sensationalizing, gay people paid the price, as news organizations as well as readers went wild.[66]

The *New York Times* reprinted the Associated Press version of the story straight from the wire machine. The *Times* story began: "Some children may have contracted a deadly disease of the immune system from 'routine close contact' with their families."[67] Within days, newspapers from coast to coast were running photos of firefighters and police officers arming themselves in gas masks and rubber gloves. The photos were soon joined by articles about dentists refusing to provide service to AIDS patients. ABC television added to the hysteria when correspondent Geraldo Rivera announced to nineteen million people watching the "20/20" magazine program, "The nation's entire blood supply may be threatened by AIDS."[68] Conservative Patrick Buchanan fanned the flames of fear and hatred through his syndicated newspaper column: "The poor homosexuals; they have declared war upon nature, and now nature is exacting an awful retribution."[69]

Gay journalism had its work cut out for it as it had to struggle on two fronts, informing readers about the disease while also alerting them to the AIDS hysteria that was creating a new wave of discrimination. By August, the telephones at gay papers all over the country were ringing off the hook with calls from gay men with tales of ugly encounters with fear and hatred. *BAR*'s Lorch wrote sarcastically: "Everyone has their favorite horror story. We will collect an anthology before it's over."[70]

GCN -- as *Gay Community News* often is called -- became a leader in documenting cases of AIDS discrimination. After the "routine close contact" story exploded in the mainstream press, *GCN* published an article headlined "'Casual Contact' Theories Incite AIDS Panic." The newspaper pointed out that, even though there was no body of research to substantiate the suggestion, media reports prompted a flurry of bigoted acts against people with AIDS.[71]

Gay Community News identified one of the most frequent forms of discrimination as placing restrictions on where people involved with the epidemic were allowed to live. In October 1983, the Boston weekly reported that members of a New York co-op had evicted one of the country's leading AIDS researchers. "Tenants were upset that I treated patients with AIDS," Dr. Joseph Sonnabend told *GCN*. "They feared their property values would be adversely affected."[72]

The newspaper also told readers that employers were firing AIDS patients in massive numbers. Compounding both the frequency and difficulty of this particular form of inequity was the fact AIDS sufferers desperately needed the medical benefits that came with their jobs -- and went when they lost those jobs. Even "enlightened" institutions committed acts of bigotry. A front-page article in *GCN* told the story of a valued employee of the Columbia University music department who took time off to attend graduate school and then was denied his former job because he had contracted AIDS.[73] *GCN* also published an investigative piece on a day-long conference where personnel managers of major corporations paid $395 a head to learn how to get rid of employees with AIDS.[74]

By the summer, AIDS hysteria was manifesting itself in a frighteningly broad variety of ways. *Gay Community News* quoted a member of a Wisconsin county health board saying of gay sexuality, during a public meeting, "With behavior like that, you have to pay the piper," and, "Even animals know better than that."[75] A week later, *GCN* reported that after a gay rights group in Tulsa, Oklahoma, rented a municipal swimming pool, city employees spent an entire day draining and disinfecting the pool.[76]

The Best of Times; The Worst of Times

The early 1980s offered the gay press the opportunity for greatness. And, indeed, the time of crisis brought distinction to several news organizations.

The *New York Native* merits the most praise. Even though the fledgling bi-weekly newspaper had minuscule resources compared to those of the mammoth *New York Times*, the *Native* provided the earliest and most comprehensive coverage -- through the reporting of Dr. Lawrence Mass -- of the most important medical story of the decade. What's more, the *Native* did not shrink from warning its readers that the promiscuity that was synonymous with gay liberation was spreading the disease.

When James Kinsella wrote the first book-length study of AIDS and the news media, *Covering the Plague: AIDS and the American Media*, he praised the *Native* as "the AIDS paper," saying, "It was the first publication in America to list high-risk behavior, to discuss the potential danger of the disease being spread by a virus."[77] As late as 1984 the *Native* continued to scoop the elite of American journalism by becoming the first news organization in the country to report French scientists had discovered the virus that caused the disease -- a story that did not appear in the *New York Times* until two weeks later.[78] Through aggressive and honest reporting, the *Native* displayed journalistic heroism at its finest, saving the lives of an untold number of readers.

The *Washington Blade* also should be commended. It took advantage of its proximity to the federal enclave where public policy decisions were deciding the destiny of Gay America. By developing sources inside the government and persistently covering the complex issues surrounding AIDS, the *Blade* served both the institution of journalism and its own readership. Another gay publication performing well was *Gay Community News*, which illuminated legal issues surrounding the epidemics of AIDS as well as AIDS hysteria.

The three San Francisco publications do not merit praise. The *Bay Area Reporter* deserves the most criticism. The second largest gay paper in the country downplayed the spread of the epidemic in the bath houses, partly because it saw any attempt to ban sexual activity as a setback for gay liberation and partly because it did not want to lose the revenue it received from bath house ads. Even when the paper finally acknowledged AIDS could no longer be ignored, the self-proclaimed sensationalistic tabloid focused not on medical details or public policy issues, but targeted -- incredibly -- AIDS activists and AIDS patients. And then news editor Paul Lorch engaged in the macabre act of gaining pleasure from the deaths of the men who had criticized him.

The *San Francisco Sentinel* also rates harsh judgment. The newspaper appears to have deliberately misled its readers with front-page news stories and editorials, such as the items headlined "Most Tubs, Clubs Safe" and "Safe and Responsible Baths." The *Sentinel* also ridiculed AIDS research, fabricating "humorous" stories such as "BRUNCH CAUSES 'GAY CANCER.'"

The Advocate is the third publication deserving a place in the hall of shame. The era's wealthiest and most widely circulated gay voice was best positioned to alert Gay America to the epidemic that was threatening to make gay men an extinct species. But the publication opted to remain silent.

Ultimately, the gay press in its early 1980s AIDS coverage mirrored the performance of the American news media throughout the last three centuries. Some publications -- most notably the *New York Native* -- have employed their resources to cover the news of the day with integrity and commitment to their readers, while others have opted to follow a less noble path often being lured in that direction by the hopes of financial success.

1. Lenny Giteck, "The Gay Pursuit of Muscle," *The Advocate*, 11 June 1981, 27.

2. Randy Shilts, "Big Business: Gay Bars and Baths Come Out of the Bush Leagues," *The Advocate*, 2 June 1976, 37.

3. The *New York Native* had been founded in December 1980. On the *Native's* circulation in the early 1980s, see Allan F. Yoder, "Gay publications now," *Washington Blade*, 29 April 1983, 20.

4. The *Washington Blade* was founded in October 1969 and is still being published today. In the early 1980s, it had a weekly circulation of less than 20,000. On the *Blade's* circulation, see Allan F. Yoder, "Gay publications now," *Washington Blade*, 29 April 1983, 20.

5. *Gay Community News* was founded in June 1973. In the early 1980s, *Gay Community News* had a weekly circulation of about 20,000. On the *Gay Community News's* circulation, see Allan F. Yoder, "Gay publications now," *Washington Blade*, 29 April 1983, 20. Although *Gay Community News* ceased publication from 1992 to 1994, it has been revived as a quarterly that is still being published today.

6. *The Advocate* was founded in September 1967 as the *Los Angeles Advocate*. It shortened its name with the May 13-26, 1970, issue. On the early history of the *Los Angeles Advocate*, see Rodger Streitmatter, "The *Advocate*: Setting the Standard for the Gay Liberation Press," *Journalism History* vol. 19, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 93-102. The *San Francisco Sentinel* was founded in 1974. The *Bay Area Reporter* was founded in April 1971. In the early 1980s, *The Advocate* had a bi-weekly circulation of 80,000, the *Bay Area Reporter* had a bi-weekly circulation of 25,000, and the *San Francisco Sentinel* had a bi-weekly circulation of less than 20,000. On the circulations, see Allan F. Yoder, "Gay publications now," *Washington Blade*, 29 April 1983, 20. The *Advocate*, *Sentinel*, and *Bay Area Reporter* all continue to be published today.

7. Author's telephone interview with George Mendenhall, 13 September 1993, during which Mendenhall was in San Francisco.

8. Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987). Shilts covered AIDS for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He also was the first openly gay reporter for a major metropolitan news organization.

9. Author's telephone interview with Randy Shilts, 21 August 1993, during which Shilts was in Guerneville, California.

10. *New York Native*, untitled article, 5-18 December 1980, 3. The first issue of the *New York Native* was dated 5-18 December 1980, and the newspaper continues to be published.

11. Author's interview with Lawrence Mass, 26 May 1994, in New York.

12. Lawrence Mass, "Disease Rumors Largely Unfounded," *New York Native*, 18-31 May 1981, 7.

13. *San Francisco Chronicle*, "A Pneumonia That Strikes Gay Males," 6 June 1981, 4.

14. Lawrence K. Altman, "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals," *New York Times*, 3 July 1981, A-20.

15. Lawrence Mass, "Cancer in the Gay Community," *New York Native*, 27 July-9 August 1981, 1.

16. The *Times* moved AIDS to page one with Robert Pear, "Health Chief Calls AIDS Battle 'No. 1 Priority,'" 25 May 1983.

17. Lawrence Mass, "Cancer in the Gay Community," *New York Native*, 27 July-9 August 1981, 1.

18. Lawrence Mass, *New York Native*, "Cancer in the Gay Community," 27 July-9 August 1981, 20-21.

19. Author's interview with Mass, 26 May 1994.

20. Author's interview with Mass, 26 May 1994.

21. Author's interview with Mass, 26 May 1994; Lawrence Mass, "An Epidemic Q & A," *New York Native*, 21 June-4 July 1982, 12.

290.

22. Shilts, *And the Band Played*, 191.

23. Rodger Streitmatter, "AIDS: 'It's just a matter of time,'" *The Quill*, May 1984, 22-27.

24. Yoder, "Gay publications now," 20.

25. Author's telephone interview with Randy Shilts, 11 August 1993, during which Shilts was in Guerneville, California.

26. Author's interview with Shilts, 21 August 1993.

27. *The Advocate*, "'Gay' Pneumonia? Not Really, Says Researcher," 23 July 1981, 7.

28. Randy Shilts, "Foreword," in Thompson, *Long Road to Freedom: The Advocate History of the Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: St. Martin's, 1994), xv.

29. Paul Lorch, *Bay Area Reporter*, "Sleazy Rags," 21 October 1982, 6.

30. Author's interview with Shilts, 21 August 1993.

31. Author's interview with Mendenhall, 13 September 1993. The Stonewall Rebellion began the night of 27 June 1969 when New York City police raided the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, and hundreds of drag queens, other gay men, and lesbians fought back, first by jeering at the police and then by throwing coins, rocks, bottles, and a parking meter or two. Several days of rioting followed the incident. On the Stonewall Rebellion, see Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1993).

32. Mass, *New York Native*, "The Epidemic Continues," 29 March-11 April 1982, 13-14.

33. Randy R. Randall, "BRUNCH CAUSES 'GAY CANCER,'" *San Francisco Sentinel*, 1 April 1982, 7.

34. *Bay Area Reporter*, "The Caldron," 1 April 1982, 18.

35. W.E. Beardemphl, "Destroying the Myth of AIDS," *San Francisco Sentinel*, 9 June 1983, 5.

36. Larry Kramer, "1,112 and Counting," *New York Native*, 14-27 March 1983, 1.

37. Author's interviews with Shilts, 21 August 1993.

38. Author's interviews with Mendenhall, 13 September 1993.

39. Kramer, "1,112 and Counting," 1.

40. Kramer, "1,112 and Counting," 18.

41. *The Advocate*, "AIDS -- A New Sexually Transmitted Disease," 28 April 1983, 10; Masha Gessen, "Twenty-five gay and lesbian years," *The Advocate*, 6 October 1992, "if it takes 25 more" insert.

42. Paul Lorch, "GAY MEN DYING," *Bay Area Reporter*, 17 March 1983, 6.

43. Paul Lorch, "Gay Men Dying," *Bay Area Reporter*, 31 March 1983, 6.

44. *Bay Area Reporter*, "AIDS & Co. Strikes Back," 21 April 1983, 1.

45. Gary Schweikhart, "ANGRY AIDS PATIENTS ORGANIZE; Lorch Sends Blistering Response," *San Francisco Sentinel*, 28 April 1983, 1.

46. Shilts, *Band Played On*, 274.

47. Gary Schweikhart, "AIDS GALA BENEFIT QUESTIONED," *San Francisco Sentinel*, 1 September 1983, 1.

48. Gary Schweikhart, "How the AIDS Benefit Report is Flawed," *San Francisco Sentinel*, 22 December 1983, 1.

49. Mike Hippler, "AIDS and the Baths," *Bay Area Reporter*, 15, 18.

50. *Gay Community News*, "garage sale marks closing of baths," 10 September 1983, 2.

51. Author's interview with Mendenhall, 13 September 1993.

52. George Mendenhall, "Sex Banned in Sex Palaces with Gay Backing," *Bay Area Reporter*, 12 April 1984, 1.

53. Paul Lorch, "Killing the Movement," *Bay Area Reporter*, 5 April 1984, 6-7.

54. Nathan Fain, "Aftershocks from the Bay Area," *The Advocate*, 1 May 1984, 14, 15.

55. Allen White, "Small Turnout to Protest Sex Club Closing," *Bay Area Reporter*, 5 April 1984, 5.

56. *Bay Area Reporter*, "New Editors for Bay Area Reporter," 28 June 1984, 11.

57. Allan F. Yoder, "Gay publications now," *Washington Blade*, 29 April 1983, 20. Yoder was Washington correspondent for the *Bergen* (New Jersey) *Record*.

58. John Jacobs, "Baby with AIDS disease raises doubt about blood transfusions," *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, 12 December 1982, 4.

59. Lou Chibbaro Jr., "Hemophilia group urges ban on blood from Gays," *Washington Blade*, 21 January 1983, 1; *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Potential AIDS Victims Urged Not to Donate Blood," 4 March 1983, 39.

60. Shilts, *Band Played On*, 267.

61. Lisa M. Keen and Lou Chibbaro Jr., "AIDS funding," *Washington Blade*, 11 February 1983, 29.

62. Larry Bush, "Waxman bill would speed up AIDS research," *Washington Blade*, 25 February 1983, 1.

63. Lou Chibbaro Jr., "CDC tightens access on AIDS records," *Washington Blade*, 3 August 1984, 1.

64. Dave Walter, "House report blasts AIDS response," *Washington Blade*, 9 December 1983, 1.

65. *Washington Blade*, Dave Walter, "Brandt asks HHS for more AIDS money," 13 July 1984, 1.

66. On the *Journal of the American Medical Association* overstating the story, see Shilts, *Band Played On*, 300-01.

67. *New York Times*, "Family Contact Studied In Transmitting AIDS," 6 May 1983, 21.

68. "20/20," 26 May 1983.

69. Patrick Buchanan, "Mother Nature getting even," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 25 May 1983, A-15.

70. Paul Lorch, "Continuing Coverage," *Bay Area Reporter*, 4 August 1983, 6.

71. Bob Nelson, "'Casual Contact' Theories Incite AIDS Panic," *Gay Community News*, 18 June 1983, 3.

72. Bob Nelson, "AIDS Researcher Fights Eviction," *Gay Community News*, 22 October 1983, 6.

73. Peg Byron, "Complaint Filed for AIDS-Related Bias," *Gay Community News*, 3 September 1983, 1.

74. Craig Harris, "Corporate U.S. Looks at Workers with AIDS," *Gay Community News*, 1 March 1986, 3.

75. Jay C. Jones, "Official Makes Anti-Gay Remarks, Loses Position," *Gay Community News*, 6 August 1983, 1.

76. *Gay Community News*, "pool disinfected after gay group's swimming party," 13 August 1983, 2.

77. James Kinsella, *Covering the Plague: AIDS and the American Media* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 32-33.

78. Thomas Steele, "CDC Director Says Announcement of AIDS Cause Is Forthcoming," *New York Native*, 9-22 April 1984, 7; the *New York Times* did not publish the story about the virus being discovered until 22 April 1984.

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ABSTRACT

THE FARMER AND THE RADIO MAN SHOULD BE FRIENDS: CLEAR CHANNEL RADIO STATIONS AND THE FARM LOBBY, 1941-1968

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This study examines the relationship between the Clear Channel Broadcasting Service (CCBS) and various farm organizations. The CCBS was a lobbying group that represented the interests of clear channel AM radio stations, and it allied with farm groups to enhance its political power. The CCBS encouraged farm leaders to write letters to Congress and the FCC, pass resolutions favoring clear channels and print pro-clear channel articles in their publications. In return, the CCBS provided coverage of the farm groups' conventions and other events. The alliance began to weaken in the late 1940s as other media such as television and FM radio began to serve the farmer, and clear channel stations featured less farm programming. However, the CCBS was able to use its farm support to counteract the charges of smaller stations that clear channels were monopolistic. As sources, the study uses the papers of the CCBS, as well as FCC and Congressional documents and interviews with CCBS and farm personnel.

THE FARMER AND THE RADIO MAN SHOULD BE FRIENDS: CLEAR CHANNEL RADIO STATIONS AND THE FARM LOBBY, 1941-1968

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THE FARMER AND THE RADIO MAN SHOULD BE FRIENDS: CLEAR CHANNEL RADIO STATIONS AND THE FARM LOBBY, 1941-1968

"Following rural free delivery, the telephone, automobile and hard roads, radio has probably done more than anything else to eliminate rural isolation," George C. Biggar of Chicago's WLS wrote in Broadcasting magazine in 1938.[1] A 1945 survey by the Department of Agriculture showed that most farmers were enthusiastic about the services radio brought into the home, and that they would miss radio if it were no longer available.[2] Reynold M. Wik summarized the importance of early radio to the farmer:

> [T]he farmer's main interests were practical. He wanted the daily weather forecasts to help protect his property and to help in the management of his affairs. Before radio, rural people relied on newspapers and local telephone lines for weather reports and although this information was helpful it tended to be too vague in nature and too slow in delivery.[3]

While urban and rural listeners alike enjoyed radio's entertainment programming, farmers depended on radio as a source of valuable information as well.

As the farmer depended on radio, the most important political movements of the early twentieth century depended on the farmer. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Populism had taken the so-called "agrarian myth" to heart, maintaining that the success or failure of the country was in large part tied to the fate of the farmer. It was a notion that also would be embraced, although to a somewhat lesser degree, by Progressivism and the New Deal policies of Franklin Roosevelt, and it was embodied in programs such as rural electrification, rural free delivery and farm subsidies.[4] The farmer was indeed an important player in the politics of the first half of the twentieth century.

It was not surprising, then, when in the early 1940s a group of radio stations hoping to enhance its lobbying clout sought to attach itself to farmers. The match was nearly perfect: farmers needed radio, and the broadcasters needed a powerful political ally. If the group could convince farmers that its stations were providing the best service to rural areas, it had a chance to substantially enhance its political position.

The group of stations was the Clear Channel Broadcasting Service (CCBS), formed in 1941 to represent the interests of clear channel AM stations. Clear channel stations were authorized by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to use the highest available power, 50,000 watts, and also had exclusivity of operation on their frequencies after sundown. Thus, at night, when AM signals can travel hundreds or even thousands of miles, clear channel stations enjoyed a frequency free from the interference of other stations.

This study examines the relationship between the CCBS and various farm groups from the CCBS's formation in 1941 until the group closed its Washington, D.C., office in 1968. By that time, the alliance between the CCBS and farmers had broken apart, the victim of the clear channel stations' changed priorities, the factionalization of farm groups and the deteriorating power base of both the farm lobbies and the CCBS. The main primary sources for this study are the papers of the CCBS, which are located at the law offices of Wiley, Rein and Fielding in Washington, D.C. These documents, which include meeting minutes, legal notes and correspondence between the CCBS and various farm organizations, have never before been accessed by a researcher. In addition, several former CCBS and farm group representatives have been interviewed. The study focuses on how the CCBS sought to gain and preserve the support of farm groups, how the CCBS used farm groups to enhance its position in Congress and at the FCC and how the groups eventually grew apart.

The alliance between farmers and broadcasters has been largely ignored by mass communications researchers. Wik and others have documented the importance of radio to farmers, but the political relationship between the two groups has been neglected. Indeed, histories of broadcasting tend to discuss the clear channel issue briefly if at all, and the development of FCC policy on clear channels in the post-World War II era is rarely mentioned.[5] This study shows the significance of the relationship between farm groups and the clear channel stations, and how that relationship changed in light of developments in the broadcasting industry, changes in the makeup of the American population and shifts in political power.

Clear Channels at Issue

The idea that there should be an elite group of more powerful radio stations to serve rural areas is almost as old as radio broadcasting itself. The concept of clear channels was formalized in the Federal Radio Commission's 1928 frequency allocation plan, which designated 40 of the AM broadcast band's 96 frequencies as for the exclusive use of one station at night. Other stations could operate on the frequencies during the day, but had to sign off at night so that their signals would not interfere with the dominant station. Providing coverage to the vast and isolated rural areas of the country was one of the most important goals of early radio regulation, and it was initially agreed that the best way to do that was with powerful clear channel stations. In fact, the FCC allowed clear channel station WLW in Cincinnati, Ohio, to broadcast experimentally with 500,000 watts from 1934 to 1939 to study the effects on rural coverage.[6]

But although the WLW experiment showed that increasing the power of clear channel stations could improve rural coverage, it raised other questions as well. Smaller stations said that the so-called "superpower" would make clear channel stations too dominant economically and politically as well as electrically. As other clear channel stations began to ask for superpower licenses, owners of less powerful stations urged the FCC to refuse the requests and called for the "breakdown" of clear channels by allowing other stations to operate on the frequencies at night. Station owners also urged their congressmen to pressure the owners of some clear channel stations to consent to voluntary nighttime duplication, and the FCC decided in a few cases to order duplications of clear frequencies. By 1941, only 25 of the original 40 clear channels remained "clear."[7]

The pressures on the clear channels led Edwin Craig, owner of Nashville's WSM, to form the Clear Channel Group (CCG) in 1934. The CCG, made up of 13 clear channel stations, functioned rather informally, presenting testimony at FCC channel allocation hearings in 1936 and 1938. Although no major decisions were made as a result of the hearings, the issue was far from dead, and in 1941 the FCC announced its intention to finally settle the long standing dispute over clear channels.

The CCBS was merely a new version of the CCG, composed of most of the same members. The name change, however, signaled the beginning of a more ambitious agenda, as the group opened a Washington, D.C., office and hired a full-time director. Membership requirements for the CCBS were simple: any clear channel station not owned by a network could join. Of the 25 clear channel stations, 17 were independently owned and all but one of these signed on with the CCBS.[8] Within a few years, the group was well-known at the FCC, on Capitol Hill and among other radio stations. Democratic Senator Edwin Johnson of Colorado, who would become the main nemesis of clear channels in the Senate, called the CCBS "a well entrenched, well financed, well staffed group who are determined to have radio control in the United States."[9]

Llewellyn White, in his 1947 book The American Radio, called the CCBS "The most powerful radio lobby in the capital."[10]

The United States' entry into World War II postponed FCC action on the clear channels and gave the CCBS time to promote itself. The group's director, Victor Sholis, the former public relations chief at the Department of Commerce, met with military and government leaders to offer "all-out use of our facilities and personnel" for the war effort.[11] The group promoted clear channel stations as the most reliable means of communicating with the American population and even printed and distributed a pamphlet, "The 25 American Radio Stations Hitler Likes Least," which touted the clear channels as a way to combat enemy propaganda. "These 25 stations smash one of Hitler's pet strategies," the pamphlet said. "They draw Americans into the very heart of the battle."[12]

Forming the Farm Alliance

The CCBS also began to cultivate its alliance with farm groups during the war. Although the farm population was starting to decline, farmers still represented about 30 percent of the nation's work force, and farm lobbies such as the National Grange and American Farm Bureau Federation remained among the most powerful special interest groups in Washington.[13] In fact, some have argued that New Deal programs of the 1930s placed farm groups in a position of power that belied their numbers. Anthony J. Badger maintains that the position of privilege gained for farm groups during the New Deal carried over into the postwar years as well:

> Farm policy in post-war America seemed to be determined not by the national interest or even the overall farm interest but by the narrow special interests of particular farmers, who appeared to be wielding more and more political control as they grew ever fewer in numbers.[14]

A 1950 congressional investigation showed that the four leading farm lobbies--the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Farmers Union, the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and the National Grange--spent more than $1 million on lobbying between 1947 and the middle of 1950. While this amount is nowhere near what the largest lobbies spent (the American Medical Association, for example, spent more than $1.5 million in 1949 alone), farm lobbies were a pervasive force on Capitol Hill.[15]

Despite the potential value of radio to the farmer, rural areas lagged well behind urban centers in purchasing home receivers. One reason for this slow adoption rate was the lack of electricity in many rural areas. While battery-powered radios were available, the batteries were cumbersome and expensive. The creation of the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, however, made great strides in bringing electric power to the farm: although only 10 percent of farms had electricity in 1930, by 1945 that number had risen to 40 percent.[16] A survey conducted in 1938 by the Joint Committee on Radio Research showed that 69 percent of rural homes had radios, a total of nearly 9.5 million families. Urban penetration was more than 90 percent, but the gap was closing.[17] By the 1940s, the farmer and his radio had become important allies, and the CCBS was doing its best to make sure farmers were especially amicable to clear channel stations.

Farmers were a central part of the CCBS's strategy from the time of the group's formation. While many smaller radio stations relied on outside sources for farm information, most clear channel stations--and all members of the CCBS--employed full-time farm directors.[18] In April 1941, Sholis met with clear channel farm directors to outline a strategy for "marshalling support among the farm bloc for the preservation of clear channels."[19] The strategy included giving talks before state and local farm group meetings and talking to farm leaders personally. "In these personal conversations," Sholis said, "our aim is not only to familiarize these leaders with the clear channel story, but also to convert them to the cause." Farm directors were urged to set up booths at local fairs and give out clear channel souvenirs. "The Who's Who of agriculture assembles at state and county fairs," Sholis advised.[20] The CCBS also distributed pro-clear channel news articles for farm groups to print in their newsletters and mobilized farm leaders to write letters in support of clear channels to the FCC and Congress.[21]

Late in 1941, the CCBS organized its first letter writing campaign, and Sholis told FCC Chairman James Lawrence Fly to expect a flood of correspondence from powerful farm groups. Unfortunately for Sholis, however, the first letter Fly received was from the relatively inconsequential Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association, Incorporated. The group sent Fly a copy of a resolution favoring retention of clear channels that it had passed at the Cactus Hotel in San Angelo, Texas, and Fly sarcastically informed Sholis that CCBS efforts to mobilize farm groups were paying off. "Today I got the first ripple from the tidal wave with which you threatened me," Fly wrote. "If this sort of unbearable pressure is going to be brought, I judge I will have to watch my step."[22]

Sholis, showing an equal penchant for sarcasm, responded:

> It would be the Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers who broke through and dropped their lamb of a resolution on your doorstep. . . . It was with considerable difficulty that we prevailed upon them not to carry out their threat to march on Washington at Christmas time with their sheep, dip and all.[23]

At the end of the letter, Sholis warned Fly to expect more mail from groups just as influential as the one from Texas. "Wait till you hear the Clarion County Pomona Grange blow the trumpet on behalf of clear channels," he wrote.[24] The exchange was indicative of the close relationship Sholis had formed with farm groups and FCC personnel.

The FCC Tackles the Clear Channel Issue

In February 1945, the FCC issued notice that it was ready to undertake a comprehensive study of the clear channel situation. Hearings began in January 1946 and continued sporadically throughout 1946 and 1947, focusing on how to provide better coverage for rural areas. The most striking point about the first round of hearings was the fact that some farm group representatives testified against clear channels. Representatives from the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Grange and National Farmers Union said radio service to the farmer was inadequate, and they favored more local voices to serve rural listeners. C. Maurice Wieting of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives said his group "looks with disfavor on any proposals to attempt to solve the present lack of radio signals for the farmer by granting superpower in excess of 50,000 watts."[25]

Despite efforts begun during the war to increase contact with farm groups and improve farm coverage, the CCBS was not prepared at the beginning of the FCC hearings. The group had become bogged down in efforts at the State Department to protect clear channels from Cuban interference, and neglected to prepare its stations for the hearings. By the end of February, however, the Cuban situation had played itself out, and the CCBS could devote all of its resources to the farm groups. "Programming for farmers and small town listeners has become a major question in the hearings," Sholis told members in February. "I can't overemphasize to you the importance of making as strong and effective a case as possible."[26]

When the hearings resumed in April, one of the CCBS's first actions was to minimize the damage done by farm organizations at the January hearings. Edward A. O'Neal, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, presented testimony favoring clear channels and urging the FCC to do whatever was necessary to preserve and improve clear channel service. The legal advisor to the Regional Broadcasters Committee, a group that opposed the CCBS, attacked what he called O'Neal's "prepared statement," which was prepared, he suspected, by the CCBS.[27] The CCBS also had made a conscious effort to improve the farm programming on its member stations after the January hearings. This fact was not lost on James G. Patton, the president of the Farmers Educational Cooperative Union of America, who recalled two years later:

> [O]ur organization appeared before the Federal Communications Commission in January 1946 to protest that the clear-channel stations were failing to live up to their obligation to provide farmers with adequate farm reports, weather service and farm news. . . . It must be said that since the FCC has begun its investigations of the rural service of clear channel stations there has been a decided improvement in their farm broadcasts. . . . I am not sure that this improved service will continue once the FCC has rendered a final decision on clear facilities.[28]

Individual CCBS member stations also testified, concentrating, as Sholis had advised, on their public service and farm programming. Harry W. Schacter, president of the Committee for Kentucky, praised Louisville station WHAS's cooperation with his group's effort to "change Kentucky from a backward to a progressive state."[29]

The CCBS presented data showing that reliable radio signals were not available to more than 60 percent of the United States' land area at night, leaving more than 23 million listeners without satisfactory radio service. Despite the fact that the number of radio stations had nearly tripled since the late 1930s, the CCBS asserted that the unserved population had actually grown.[30] The existence of this so-called "White Area" was not seriously disputed, even by opponents of the clear channels.[31] What was disputed, however, was the best method of bringing radio service there. Groups representing smaller stations advocated duplicating the clear channels and adding strategically placed local and regional stations, while the CCBS called for power increases to 750,000 watts on twenty clear channel stations.[32]

At the beginning of 1948, the FCC ordered the record in the clear channel case closed. The commission said it would resolve the dispute by May of that year, and instructed its engineers to draw up three plans: a twenty-two-station superpower plan similar to the CCBS proposal, an eighteen-station superpower plan and duplication of all clear channels.[33] Finally, it seemed, the issue would be resolved.

But in February Democratic Senator Edwin Johnson of Colorado introduced a bill to break down the clear channels and limit their power to 50,000 watts. Johnson asked the FCC to delay a decision on the clear channel matter until the Senate could hold hearings, and FCC Chairman Wayne Coy reluctantly agreed.[34] Broadcasting magazine called the hearings, held in March, "a ten-day version of the FCC's three-year clear-channel proceeding," and that was essentially what it turned out to be.[35] The CCBS was able to get eleven local and regional farm groups to testify and persuaded numerous other groups to write letters to the committee.

Congress adjourned before any action was taken on the bill, but the delay had pushed the clear channel issue to the back burner at the FCC. By the end of 1948, the commission was dealing with foreign treaties, FM and television, and thus had no time to address the clear channels. Throughout the rest of the 1940s and 1950s, the clear channels remained in a holding pattern.

Waiting For a Decision

Despite the FCC's inactivity, the CCBS continued its work to promote clear channels and to maintain its favor among farm groups. The CCBS urged farm organizations to pass resolutions favorable to clear channels, and in many cases--especially with the American Farm Bureau Federation and National Council of Farmer Cooperatives--it succeeded. These resolutions were written largely by CCBS personnel, and "blueprints" for similar resolutions were distributed to member stations. A resolution passed by the American Farm Bureau Federation in 1946 was indicative of what the CCBS sought:

> Farm people generally are having to depend primarily upon clear channel radio broadcasting stations for their radio information and dissemination of their programs to others. . . . We therefore firmly oppose any reduction in the number of clear channel stations. We urge that the frequencies of clear channel stations be held inviolate by international agreement and that the power of these stations be increased to allow for complete coverage to all areas in territories of the respective stations.[36]

The CCBS pressured farm organizations to reaffirm resolutions at regular intervals, and also fought the efforts of insurgent groups to revoke pro-clear channel resolutions. Such efforts within groups usually arose because a particular representative had a station in his area that stood to gain by increasing its hours of operation if the clear channels were duplicated.[37]

Sholis had left the group in 1947 to return to WHAS, a clear channel station in Louisville, Kentucky, and in 1949, Ward Quaal, the Assistant to the General Manager at Chicago's WGN, took over as CCBS director. Quaal placed more emphasis on programming, developing a system that member stations could use to exchange farm programs and information and attended numerous farm conventions. He even set up temporary news bureaus to cover the farm conventions on member stations.[38]

Quaal left the group in 1952 to work for the Crosley Corporation, and was succeeded by Hollis Seavey, the director of Washington, D.C., operations for the Mutual Broadcasting System. Seavey tried to carry on the cultivation of farm groups begun by Quaal but found he had less of a knack for it. "From the very beginning, as someone who grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I really wasn't very close to the soil," he later lamented.[39] His job was made even more difficult by the breaks in support for the clear channels by farm groups that had begun to form in the 1940s. Farm programming, once the primary province of clear channel stations, was being taken up by smaller stations, and now an increasing number of farmers felt loyalty not to a distant clear channel station but to a closer regional or local outlet.

Groups such as the American Farm Bureau Federation, which had provided some of the most ardent support for clear channels, passing resolutions throughout the 1940s explicitly opposing their breakdown, were by the 1950s taking much more nebulous positions. In 1958, the group's resolution stated: "Radio and television provide a valuable service to rural areas. We encourage efforts of the broadcasting industry to expand and improve its service to agriculture." As Seavey later complained to CCBS members, the Farm Bureau resolution did not "represent a strong affirmative stand."[40]

The 1960s: Losing Support

From 1961 to 1968 the CCBS would interact with farm groups more than ever before, yet the schism between the group and farm organizations continued to grow. In June 1961, the FCC announced its intention to resolve the clear channel dispute by duplicating 13 of the 25 frequencies. The question of superpower for the remaining 12 was "left to further study."[41] After almost two decades of waiting, the CCBS now had its decision and it was certainly not what the group had hoped for.

Seavey had left the group in the late 1950s, and for a time the CCBS operated without a full-time director. Once the FCC's decision became known, however, the group hired Roy Battles, the former Assistant to the Master at the National Grange. Battles's hiring was a last-ditch effort to rescue the support of farm groups, and his credentials were impressive: besides his work at the Grange, he had been WLW's farm director, president of the National Association of Television and Radio Farm Directors and a county agricultural agent in Ohio.[42]

The CCBS immediately mobilized farm groups in letter writing campaigns, and continued to encourage pro-clear channel resolutions. Battles was even able to get the National Farmers Union (NFU), which opposed the CCBS throughout the 1940s, to pass a favorable resolution. He called the group's turnaround "a major breakthrough," and it was attributable to his working of contacts both inside and outside the NFU.[43] By the beginning of 1962, the group's efforts had paid off in the form of four bills introduced in the House of Representatives opposing the FCC's decision.

In February, the Subcommittee on Communications and Power held hearings on the bills. The CCBS testified, and several farm groups provided support as well. Hershel D. Newsom, Battles's old boss at the National Grange, testified in favor of the pending legislation, as did Kit H. Haynes of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and John C. Lynn of the American Farm Bureau Federation.[44]

In July, the full House passed a resolution that authorized the FCC to grant power in excess of 50,000 watts at its discretion and asked the commission to delay action on clear channel duplications for one year. The FCC agreed, but the CCBS could neither persuade the FCC to approve superpower nor force a reconsideration of the duplications during the year-long hiatus. In 1963, the FCC began breaking down the clear channels.

Battles continued to tour what he called the "farm circuit" regularly, attending meetings, giving speeches and making sure farm groups got coverage on clear channel stations. Unlike most previous directors, however, he was able to talk to farmers not only about the importance of clear channels, but about other farm issues. He made it a point to welcome new officers to the farm groups, and many of his letters to farm leaders did not even mention the clear channel issue. Roger W. Fleming, who worked at the American Farm Bureau Federation's Washington, D.C., office during the time Battles was CCBS director, says he still has a close relationship with Battles. The two men visit each other regularly, and as Fleming says, "We haven't even discussed the clear channels for about the last three years."[45] It is clear that Battles maintained a relationship with many farm leaders that transcended clear channels.

By the middle of the decade, Battles realized many clear channel stations did not share his interest in the farmer. In a letter to a CCBS lawyer in 1966, he chronicled the decline of farm programming on individual stations, noting that an increasing number were terminating it or relegating it to hours when few were listening. "Without getting into the merits or demerits of the above trends, the question comes up very clearly," he wrote. "How long can we expect enthusiastic agricultural support for CCBS positions in this climate?"[46] Battles had seen first hand the disenchantment of the farm groups, and he believed it pointed out a dangerous fault in the CCBS-farm alliance.

But there was also complacency within the CCBS about the clear channel fight. After more than two decades of pursuing more power and protection of their signals, many clear channel stations now no longer wanted to increase their service areas. Television had taken the stations' national advertising base, and many station operators feared they could not support a wider coverage area even if they could get it.

In early 1968, Cincinnati's WLW decided not to renew its membership in the CCBS. The group had already lost five other members either because the stations were bought by networks or because new owners decided not to renew membership. Some remaining members had already begun to flinch at the increasing cost of supporting the CCBS, and the loss of WLW would only make matters worse as the other stations would have pick up a larger share of the group's $60,000 annual budget.[47] At the end of September, the group decided to close its Washington, D.C., office, and Battles went to work for the American Farm Bureau Federation.[48] Although the group continues to operate today, it does so in a much more informal manner and has no full-time employees. The alliance with farm groups has now been largely abandoned.

Conclusion

"We couldn't have gotten anywhere without the farmers," Quaal says in looking back at the history of the CCBS.[49] At first, the farm groups needed the CCBS as well because many farmers were isolated from the rest of society and relied on clear channel stations as their only source of news and information. Unfortunately for the CCBS, as time went by the farm groups needed the CCBS less, as new media such as FM and television came to cover rural areas, and regional and local stations began to serve farm interests. For a time, the CCBS tried to counteract this competition by making a conscious effort to provide more farm information, including extensive coverage of national, state and local farm conventions. But even the clear channel stations themselves owed less to the rural constituency as time went on, and instead turned toward serving suburban listeners. The stations were merely responding to changing economics and had begun directing their programs at the sprawling suburbs surrounding metropolitan areas.[50]

The farm groups began to weaken during the 1950s and later as well. The farm population continued to shrink, and the New Deal policies that had placed farm lobbies in their powerful position in the 1940s and 1950s were waning. In addition, preeminent lobbies such as the American Farm Bureau Federation found their constituency increasingly divided. John Mark Hansen contends that the power of the farm lobby was being eclipsed by specialized commodity groups and an increasingly politicized consumer sector. "Lobbies gain access when, in the judgment of the congressional elites, they represent constituents," Hansen writes, and by the 1980s groups such as the National Grange and American Farm Bureau Federation were seen as having a limited constituency.[51]

The alliance between the CCBS and farm groups was nonetheless useful for its time. Although the FCC eventually decided against superpower and ordered all clear channels duplicated, the CCBS was able to stave off this action for two decades based largely on the support it got from farm leaders. In the face of charges that clear channels represented economic, social and political monopolies, the CCBS was able to portray its members as providing a valuable service to the rural constituency. Without the ardent support of most of the powerful farm organizations, this claim would have sounded like hollow rhetoric.

By the middle of the 1960s, however, the marriage of the farm groups and the CCBS had essentially reached the end of its usefulness for both sides. At that time, the concepts it was based on--the primacy of the farmer in American politics, the importance of the rural audience to clear channel stations and the reliance of the farmer on radio for important information--were irreparably out of date. The farmer and the clear channel radio station might still be friends, but they were no longer pursuing the things that brought them together in the first place.

NOTES

[1] George C. Biggar, "Renewed Interest Shown By Radio in Rural Market," Broadcasting, August 1, 1938, 22.

[2] "They Like American Radio in the Country," Broadcasting, December 3, 1945, 23.

[3] Reynold M. Wik, "The Radio in Rural American During the 1920s," Agricultural History, 55 (October 1981): 341.

[4] Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 128-9, 60-63.

[5] See Gleason L. Archer, History of Radio to 1926 (New York: The American Society, Inc., 1938); John C. Baker, Farm Broadcasting: The First Sixty Years (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1981); Erik Barnouw, A Tower in Babel: A History of Broadcasting in the United States to 1933 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Erik Barnouw, The Golden Web: A History of Broadcasting in the United States, 1933-1953 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Murray Edelman, The Licensing of Radio Services in the United States, 1927 to 1947 (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1950): Walter Emery, Broadcasting and Government (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1969); Harvey J. Levin, The Invisible Resource: Use and Regulation of the Radio Spectrum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971); Robert Sears McMahon, Federal Regulation of the Radio and Television Broadcast Industry in the United States, 1927-1959 (New York: Arno Press, 1979); Philip Rosen, The Modern Stentors: Radio Broadcasters and the Federal Government, 1920-1934 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980); Laurence F. Schmeckbier, The Federal Radio Commission: Its History, Activities and Organization (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1932); Charles A. Siepmann, Radio's Second Chance (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1946); Elmer E. Smead, Freedom of Speech by Radio and Television (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1959); and Christopher H. Sterling and John M. Kittross, Stay Tuned: A Concise History of American Broadcasting (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990); George Harry Rogers, The History of the Clear Channel and Super Power Controversy in the Management of the Standard Broadcast Allocation Plan (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Utah, 1972); Eric F. Brown, Nighttime Radio for the Nation: A History of the Clear Channel Proceeding, 1945-1972 (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ohio University,

1975); Lawrence W. Lichty, The Nation's Station: A History of Station WLW (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1964); and Jeffrey Smulyan, "Power to Some People: The FCC's Clear Channel Allocation Policy," Southern California Law Review 44 (1971): 811.

[6] See Smulyan, "Power to Some People," 819; and Federal Communications Commission, Annual Report (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1935), 25.

[7] See John H. DeWitt, telephone interview by author, August 8, 1993; and R. Russel Eagan to Hollis M. Seavey, April 3, 1956, Box 1696, Wiley, Rein and Fielding Law Offices, Washington, D.C. (hereafter referred to as WRF files).

[8] The member stations were: KDKA Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; KFI, Los Angeles, California; WBAP, Ft. Worth, Texas; WCAU, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; WFAA, Dallas, Texas; WGN, Chicago, Illinois; WHAM, Rochester, New York; WHAS, Louisville, Kentucky; WHO, Des Moines, Iowa; WJR, Detroit, Michigan; WLS, Chicago, Illinois; WLW, Cincinnati, Ohio; WOAI, San Antonio, Texas; WSB, Atlanta, Georgia; WSM, Nashville, Tennessee and WWL, New Orleans, Louisiana. KSL in Salt Lake City was the only eligible station that did not join initially, although it later became a member.

[9] Ed Keys, "Johnson Prods Anti-Clears," Broadcasting, January 31, 1949, 22.

[10] Llewellyn White, The American Radio: A Report on the Broadcasting Industry in the United States from the Commission on Freedom of the Press (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1977), 148.

[11] Clear Channel Broadcasting Service to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 18, 1941, Box 1696, WRF Files.

[12] Clears Described as Hitler Enemy," Broadcasting, August 3, 1942, 28. Unfortunately, this publication is not contained in the Wiley, Rein and Fielding files, and the author has been unable to locate it elsewhere.

[13] Anthony J. Badger, The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940 (New York: The Noonday Press, 1989), 147.

[14] Ibid., 167.

[15] See John A. Crampton, The National Farmers Union: Ideology of A Pressure Group (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), xi; Karl Schriftgiesser, The Lobbyists: The Art and Business of Influencing Lawmakers (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), 63, 148; Samuel R. Berger, Dollar Harvest: The Story of the Farm Bureau (Lexington, MA: Heath Lexington Books, 1971), 32; and James MacGregor Burns, Congress on Trial: The Legislative Process and the Administrative State (New York: Gordian Press, Inc., 1949), 21.

[16] Badger, The New Deal, 179-180.

[17] Broadcasting Yearbook, 1939, (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Magazine, 1939), 60.

[18] "Farm Radio Survey," Broadcasting, October 31, 1949, 21.

[19] Memo on meeting of clear channel farm directors with Vic Sholis, April 9, 1941, Box 1696, WRF Files.

[20] "Making the LISTENER a Member of the Clear Channel Family," nd., Box 999, WRF Files.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Fly to Sholis, December 20, 1941, Box 1696, WRF Files.

[23] Sholis to Fly, December 22, 1941, Box 1696, WRF Files.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] CCBS to Members, February 23, 1946, Box 1696, WRF Files.

[27] Jack Levy, "Clear Channel Decision Seen by Fall," Broadcasting, April 22, 1946, 18.

[28] U.S. Senate, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, To Limit the Power of Radio Broadcast Stations (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1948), 882.

[29] Rufus Crater and Jack Levy, "Duplication of 10 to 12 Clear channels is Indicated," Broadcasting, May 6, 1946, 18.

[30] Bulletin Number 36, October 30, 1962, Box 1696, WRF Files.

[31] The name "White Area" came from maps used to indicate the coverage of particular radio stations. Each station's service area would be marked by a colored piece of plastic, and unserved areas remained white.

[32] See Rufus Crater, "Regionals Chart Breakdown of Clear Channels," Broadcasting, July 22, 1946, 20; and Jack DeWitt, telephone interview by author, August 8, 1993.

[33] Brown, Nighttime Radio for the Nation, 51.

[34] U.S. Senate, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, To Limit the Power of Radio Broadcast Stations (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1948), 2-5.

[35] Rufus Crater, "Clear channels' Fate," Broadcasting, March 22, 1948, 13.

[36] Memo, October 28, 1948, Box 1696, WRF Files.

[37] R. Russel Eagan to Members, November 8, 1948, Box 1696, WRF Files.

[38] Ward Quaal, telephone interview by author, January 5, 1994.

[39] Hollis M. Seavey, taped interview by Layne R. Beaty, October 28, 1986, Broadcast Pioneers Library, Washington, D.C.

[40] Hollis Seavey to Jay W. Wright, December 16, 1958, Box A405, WRF Files.

[41] Federal Communications Commission, In the Matter of Clear Channel Broadcasting in the Standard Broadcast Band, 31 FCC 604 (1961).

[42] "Name Battles to Head Clear Channel Fight," Chicago Tribune, October 24, 1961.

[43] See Roy Battles to R. Russel Eagan, April 5, 1962; and Tony T. DeChant to Roy Battles, March 1, 1965, both in Box A405, WRF Files.

[44] U.S. House, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, Clear Channel Broadcasting Stations, 87th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), 138, 144, 152.

[45] Roger W. Fleming, telephone interview by author, May 31, 1994.

[46] See Battles to Eagan, March 3, 1966, Box A406, WRF Files; and Quaal to Battles, May 23, 1962, Box A401, WRF Files.

[47] See "CCBS Proposed Dues Structure," October 10, 1967; and "Meeting Minutes," October 5, 1967, both in Box A014, WRF Files.

[48] Roy Battles to Ward Quaal, September, 16, 1968, Box A401, WRF Files.

[49] Ward Quaal, telephone interview by author, January 5, 1994.

[50] Elmo Ellis, The Changing Role of the Clear Channel Stations, January 1973, Box A014, WRF Files.

[51] John Mark Hansen, Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919-1981 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 3.

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Electrical Transcriptions: Quality Programming for All Radio Stations

Sophisticated radio audiences of the 1990s take for granted that their programming will reach them, in large part, through recordings of one sort or another. Childhood illusions of world-famous musicians singing live at the hometown radio station have long since shattered. Skips and pops in vinyl records give clues to even the most obtuse listener. As radio stations continue to convert to the pure, perfectly reproduced sounds of the compact disc (CD), they announce the format in no uncertain terms, assuming that CD use alone will attract loyal listeners. But broadcasters and audiences have not always thought so highly of recorded material.

Electrical transcriptions, recordings made specifically for broadcasting, changed the programming practices of networks and local broadcasters alike. Libraries of recorded music cost much less than live musicians, making programming less expensive and more convenient. Time zones and the onset of daylight savings time wreaked havoc with the broadcast schedule of live network programs. Transcriptions offered a solution to these problems. Transcriptions allowed radio stars to record their programs weeks in advance of scheduled broadcasts, giving the celebrities time off to follow other interests. Transcriptions also allowed broadcasters to air programs at times convenient to them, not the networks. These advantages, combined with the increasing costs of live programming, and the constantly improving sound quality of the recordings, convinced programmers that electrical transcriptions (ETs) were a viable and respectable means of broadcasting.

The Evolution of the Transcription

Although phonograph records have been played on radio from its beginning, it was not until the late 1920s that the idea of recording programs and sending them to individual stations on discs gained any momentum. Ernest R. Reichmann, an attorney for several independent (non-network) stations, said, "This method is a chain without links and therefore the only true wireless chain."[1] The idea that small stations could compete with network programming appealed to many broadcasters, and bore fruit in the late 1930s.

According to C. Lloyd Egner, former manager of NBC's Electrical Transcription Department, transcriptions evolved from long-playing records designed for talking motion pictures. Those records, synchronized with the film, provided the dialogue, sound effects, and music of the film. Regular phonograph records played for only two or three minutes, but the long-playing records stored fifteen minutes of music or drama. State-of-the-art at the time, transcription sound quality lacked the fidelity we enjoy from vinyl, cassettes, or compact discs today. High background noise and distortion repelled many listeners.[2] Egner, who also worked for Victor Talking Machine Company, said that the transcription business started mainly because Victor was "desperately seeking new outlets for . . . record manufacturing capabilities–because the record business suffered probably as much as any of the luxury businesses during the depression years."[3]

The term "electrical transcription" originated as an attempt to evade government regulations. Early FRC orders regarding the announcement of phonograph records incited Percy Deutsch, head of the World Broadcasting System, a company producing recorded programming, to coin the term. "The development of the electrical transcription name," according to Egner, "was the means of getting around that."[4] Technically, stations that played "electrical transcriptions" were not playing phonographs and did not have to announce ETs as "records." Eventually, the FRC required stations to announce ETs, too.[5]

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[1] Quoted in "New Plan Aids Small Stations," New York Times, 29 July 1928, sec. VIII, 15.

[2] C. Lloyd Egner, interview by Edwin Dunham, 29 November 1965, unpaged transcript, Broadcast Pioneers Library, Washington, D.C.

[3] Ibid.

Transcribed programs, except for those events recorded by portable equipment, were usually recorded in one of three ways: in the studio of a company which specialized in transcriptions, through a direct line from a radio station control room, or directly from the air.[6] The recording used either live talent or dubs (re-recordings) from other recordings. In the case of dubbing, program producers usually chose material, such as music, from other transcriptions or records. The producers then re-recorded the selections onto one disc. The price for producing a fifteen-minute transcribed program ran anywhere from $35 to $150 in 1937. In the late 1930s, transcribing a dubbed program cost one-third as much as transcribing a program with live talent. When using recordings to make a transcription, producers did not have to pay union scale for live musicians.[7]

The production of electrical transcription discs required a complicated process that allowed for no mistakes. A variation in the groove as slight as one-millionth of an inch could ruin a recording.[8] Most master discs, onto which the programs were directly recorded, had a sixteen-inch aluminum base coated with soft plastic or lacquer thick enough that the recording stylus never touched the aluminum. During World War II, the shortage of aluminum necessitated the use of glass as a base material. The sound quality remained comparable, but the glass discs required more careful handling. The recording stylus physically cut grooves into the plastic or lacquer coating of the master, creating a visible signature of the sound waves called a "sound trace." The grooves could be cut in one of two ways: horizontally, in which the groove retained a constant depth but fluctuated from side to side (lateral), or vertically, in which only the depth of the groove varied (hill-and-dale).[9] (See Figs. 1 and 2 in Chapter 2 for examples of hill-and-dale and lateral sound traces.) A stamping mold, formed from the original master recording, pressed out as many vinyl copies as required for distribution.

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[4] Ibid.

[5] U.S. Department of Commerce, Radio Division, Radio Service Bulletin, 30 November 1928 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), 17.

[6] Leonard Lewis, "Transcriptions–Why and How," Printers' Ink Monthly, December 1936, 32.

[7] "What is a Transcription?" Western Advertising, March 1937, 79; Jack Latham, "Spot Radio–Transcriptions and Live," Printers' Ink Monthly, February 1937, 43.

Instantaneous discs, however, did not require such a complicated process. For fast-breaking news events, the discs could be recorded right at the news scene with portable equipment. Many stations owned instantaneous recording equipment primarily for recording network programs directly from the phone line. The instantaneous recording then allowed the broadcaster to air the network program at a time more convenient than the networks' broadcasts.

Some broadcasters made instantaneous transcriptions simply to maintain a record of what they had previously broadcast. These discs were not intended to be played more than a handful of times, if at all. Made of thin, soft, flexible plastic, they required much less storage space and were better suited for filing than the thicker discs intended for broadcast use.[10]

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[8] J. Dale Healy, "Processing Radio Transcriptions," Radio and Television News, February 1950, 31.

[9] Frank E. Butler, "Techniques of Sound Recording," Radio News, November 1943, 94.

The Transcription and the Broadcaster

Broadcasters used transcriptions in a variety of ways. Radio stations needed enough programming to fill between twelve to eighteen hours each day. When possible, network affiliates filled much of their broadcast day with live programming provided by the networks, but even they often had difficulty filling the non-network hours. Independent stations, without the luxury of network programs, found filling time even more troublesome. Large independents, located near talent centers such as New York or Chicago, found filling time easier than those small markets or rural independent stations. Many smaller stations turned to pre-recorded music and transcriptions as a primary means of filling their programming day. In 1935, Variety surveyed several radio markets, large and small, and reported on the predominance of transcription use in each. All of the stations polled used live talent and recorded programming of some sort, but Variety found transcriptions used most often in the small market stations some distance from major cultural centers. In Los Angeles, where talent abounded, however, radio stations used transcriptions and phonograph records heavily. That may have been partly due to the fact that many network affiliates located in time zones west of New York often recorded the live network programs for play at a more appropriate time.[11] Variety also found broadcasters using transcriptions for an average of 20.8 percent of the broadcast day, and using phonograph records 2.3 percent of the time.[12] NAB figures showed a gain of 50.6 percent in use of transcription discs between 1935 and 1936.[13] By 1946, recordings of one type or another made up approximately 43% of all radio programming.[14] Transcriptions and records constituted most of the programming on KOEL, an independent station in Oelwein, Iowa. A staff member estimated that less than ten percent of the programming used live musicians. Live miscellaneous programming, such as news and lectures filled only another quarter of the broadcast day. The rest of the day, well over half, the station programmed transcriptions and record shows.[15]

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[10] Ibid., 22.

[11] "Transcriptions vs. Local Talent a Matter of Supply, Economics," Variety, 18 September 1935, 55.

A 1950 survey completed by station WTMJ in Milwaukee showed that 91.2 percent of stations used commercial transcriptions from transcription companies. Volunteered information suggested that few stations used them in the evening hours. In the survey, broadcasters indicated that they were concerned with the lack of standardization between transcription companies, which required a different turntable for each company.[16] Some services recorded with the hill-and-dale method, others with the lateral method; some produced sixteen-inch discs while others produced twelve-inch discs. These slight, but significant, variations sometimes gave broadcasters logistic headaches, perhaps influencing their unwillingness to adopt transcriptions.

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[12] "1935 Will Gross $85,000,000; See Upward Curve Through 1936," Variety, 18 September 1935, 45.

[13] "What is a Transcription?" 79.

[14] "Perfectionist," Time, 30 December 1946, 82.

[15] Ed Jenkins, KOEL staff member, interview by author, 22 November 1992, Colorado Springs, Colorado, tape recording, personal collection.

[16] WTMJ, "A Survey Relating to Certain Business Practices of Broadcasting Stations and Policies of Advertising Agencies Relative to Broadcasting," unpublished report, compiled by WTMJ, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 13 September 1950, Broadcast Pioneers Library, Washington, D.C.

Transcription Networks

Entertainment programs of all types reached the listening audience through transcription discs: comedy, drama, music, variety, quizzes, sports. These discs allowed the formation of ad hoc networks of stations carrying the same programs. This practice benefited advertisers and stations alike. Advertisers could air their messages in selected markets more cheaply and efficiently than on the wired networks. In return, the radio stations received quality programming. For instance, a number of stations received the transcribed "Smiley Burnett Show" in the early 1950s. Smiley Burnett, a popular cowboy singer and comedian, brought nationally known talent to many small-towns through his transcribed variety show.[17]

Some ad hoc networks, formed with single programs, grew to be larger than either ABC, CBS, or NBC. For instance, the Air Transport Association of America (ATA), an organization representing several airlines and airplane manufacturers, sponsored "Air Age," a program that aired over approximately 300 stations. The program featured aviation news delivered by a popular announcer, John Vandercook, formerly of NBC. Radio stations received the program for free and could sell the commercial slots to local advertisers. The ATA produced what amounted to a network program for about $80,000 per year which would have cost $1,400,000 on a traditional network.[18]

John L. Sinn, vice-president of the Frederic W. Ziv Company, one of the leading transcribed program services, reported that Ronald Coleman's "Favorite Story" program created an ad hoc network of 300 or so stations, airing in forty-six of the country's fifty largest markets. Another Ziv production, "The Guy Lombardo Show," picked up over 250 stations.[19]

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[17] Ed Jenkins, interview.

[18] "Canned Vandercook," Newsweek, 21 July 1947, 52-53.

One little-known "network," connected only by transcriptions, regularly provided transcribed programs to small town stations. In 1945, 210 stations were affiliated with The Keystone Broadcasting System, which called itself "the only national, full-sized network."[20] The service provided twenty-eight hours per week of fully-scripted programs. The brainchild of advertising executive Michael Sillerman, Keystone allowed advertisers to reach an estimated 32 million people not adequately covered by the networks in 1947. The stations received programming, the sponsors cut their advertising costs, and Sillerman helped establish a trend that continues today in the broadcasting concept of "bartering."[21] Bartering is a type of syndication where the program is cheap or free to the station, but has no local advertising spots. All spots are national, and there often is no space for local advertisers.

The World Broadcasting System (WBS) was organized as a competition for the networks. In addition to selling programs to the stations, it sold time on its transcribed shows, Chevrolet being one of its largest clients. Sam & Henry, who later became Amos 'n Andy, recorded their programs for World Broadcasting System distribution.[22]

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[19] John L. Sinn, "Transcription Program Trends," Radio Daily Annual, 1947, Jack Alicoate, ed. (New York: Radio Daily Magazine, 1947), 81.

[20] Keystone Broadcasting System, advertisement in Radio Daily Annual, 1945, Jack Alicoate, ed. (New York: Radio Daily Magazine, 1945), 316.

[21] "Transcriptions in the Twilight," Time, 23 June 1947, 88.

[22] C. Lloyd Egner, interview.

Transcription Libraries

Music programs, particularly disc jockey shows, used phonograph records and transcriptions unabashedly. Radio stations had been using phonograph records, manufactured much like transcriptions, since the 1920s. While considered inferior programming by many, phonograph records offered an inexpensive, practical alternative to live music. Disc jockey programs grew in number and popularity after World War II, showcasing all types of music from classical to country. As recordings improved in quality, platter shows spread across the country. Al Jarvis, one of the first disc jockeys, had no reservations about playing a disc on the air. "A phonograph record is the finished effort of many creative artists," he said. "It represented the finest musical and engineering skill of many people striving for perfection. . . . A planned program of phonograph records therefore would be excellent entertainment."[23] David E. Dunn, former President and General Manager of NBC affiliate WSFA in Montgomery, Alabama, said, "It was just almost impossible to fill eighteen hours a day with live programs."[24] Disc jockey programs alleviated part of that problem. His station used half-hour disc jockey shows on a regular basis, and he felt the community received the recorded programs well. Ed Jenkins, too, felt that the public enjoyed records on the air. When he worked at the University of Iowa's WSUI, the station had a lunchtime record program he called "one of the most listened-to programs in that corner of Iowa." The program, "Rhythm Rambles," lasted for half an hour and was targeted at the university students, although many others listened as well.[25]

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[23] Al Jarvis, "Spotlight on Turntables: The Disk Jockey," Billboard, 25 April 1953, 39.

[24] David E. Dunn, interview by author, 18 November 1990, Montgomery, Alabama, tape recording, personal collection.

While many platter shows used regular phonograph records, other music programs used transcription libraries. Many broadcasters considered transcriptions to be of higher quality than commercially available phonographs. For a monthly fee a transcription service provided sixteen-inch transcription discs, each with several separate cuts of music. In all, a station could receive a total of 2,500 to 3,000 selections, with 15 to 20 new selections added each month. Radio stations could lease the equipment necessary for broadcasting the transcriptions. The library service also included program notes and cues, so that stations which lacked the time or the personnel to design programs could use pre-planned musical programs. The service arranged notes for special holiday programs for Mother's Day, Christmas, and the like.[26] KOEL, for instance, subscribed to World Broadcasting System, mainly to supplement its popular and country records with other types of music.[27] WBS, like other library services, moved to help broadcasters maximize use of the service, helping them to change sustaining programs into commercial programs. "The scripts are timed to permit opening and closing sponsor identifications with time for full-length commercial announcements," said Al Sambrook, commercial manager for WBS.

> What is more, production aids for the shows now being furnished include opening and closing themes, with spoken introductions and closings and voice tracks by the featured stars so that the station can put together a quarter-hour or half-hour program of music plus script plus production aids that sound practically like a

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[25] Ed Jenkins, interview.

[26] Waldo Abbot, "Electrical Transcriptions," chapter in Handbook of Broadcasting: How to Broadcast Effectively (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937), 24-31; Waldo Abbot and Richard L. Rider, Handbook of Broadcasting: The Fundamentals of Radio and Television, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1957).

[27] Ed Jenkins, interview.

> custom-built show. That's what the sponsor wants and that's what the sponsors are getting in the new library technique.[28]

Milton Gabler, former vice-president of Artists and Repertoire at Decca Records, recorded transcriptions for WBS during the World War II. He said that WBS would use famous orchestras for its library service, but give them fake names due to the musicians union ban on recordings.[29] Radio stations and listeners were unknowingly getting the best recorded entertainment money could buy!

The Standard Radio Program Library Service offered many different programs designed to sell to local sponsors. In 1938, the list of nineteen programs included "The Concert Master," a weekly half-hour program that featured classical music "finely played and sung"; "Hollywood Brevities," a fifteen-minute news and gossip show; and "Hit Revue," thirty minutes of popular tunes.[30]

Muzak Corporation offered a transcription library called Associated Program Service that contained about 5,000 musical selections. In 1949 Charles C. Cowley, vice-president of Muzak, estimated that 85 percent of all radio stations used transcribed music for most of their local programming.[31]

David Kapp, brother of Decca Records founder Jack Kapp, said the two had, around the late 1920s to early 1930s, a company called "Program Service," that provided scripts for

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[28] Al Sambrook, "New Trends in Library Service," The 1949 Radio Annual, Jack Alicoate, ed. (New York: Radio Daily Corp., 1949), 73.

[29] Milton Gabler, interview by Columbia University Oral History Office, November 1959, unpaged transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, New York City.

[30] Standard Radio Program Library Service, Sales Manual, circa 1938, Alexander Sherwood Collection, Broadcast Pioneers Library, Washington, D.C.

[31] Charles C. Cowley, "Trends in Transcribed Music," The 1949 Radio Annual, Jack Alicoate, ed. (New York: Radio Daily Corp., 1949), 75.

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stations to use with their own records and announcers. One program called "Gems" was targeted for a jewelry store sponsor. "Gems" offered a selection from different musical types such as opera and classical. Some stations did not have the required records; so "Program Service" also rented the records.[32]

NBC's Thesaurus offered similar services. It provided index cards arranged for quick reference to discs, protective cabinets for the discs, and weekly scripts. When a station bought Thesaurus, it had immediately available about twenty-two hours per week of programming, including scripts, special holiday programs, sound effects, theme music, bridge music, and fanfares. Filler music like this was important: if a station's program ended a little early before the network feed came in, the station could fill time with a generic piece of music until the next program started.[33] In addition to seasonal programs, Thesaurus had such big name artists as Xavier Cugat, Sammy Kaye, Ferde Grofe, and Norman Cloutier recording music. Thesaurus was popular not only at stations in the United States, but also, overseas, making up a "fairly sizeable portion of [NBC's] business for awhile," according to Egner.[34]

Transcription services cost much more than phonograph records and took time to catch on, even at NBC's O&Os. John Royal expressed concern that "a Station Manager who could get the best of talent, such as Paul Whiteman on a record for 75c is not likely to avail himself of programs introduced by our Transcription Department." He believed that the O&O

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[32] David Kapp, interview by Columbia University Oral History Office, November 1959, unpaged transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, New York City.

[33] Willard Delano Whitfield, "A Compilation of Talks on Problems of Outside Stations," May 1940, mimeograph of a 55-page course guide for prospective NBC management, item 1444, NBC Collection, Division of Broadcasting and Recorded Sound, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[34] C. Lloyd Egner, interview.

station managers were more "phonograph-minded" than "transcription-minded."[35] Egner claimed that Thesaurus was "a means of giving the owned and operated stations of NBC a recorded type of program that [was] not phonograph records."[36]

The Transcription and the Networks

As the fidelity of the recording process improved, the networks consented to the use of transcribed programs. ABC, the first of the Big Three (NBC, CBS, and ABC) to do so regularly, used transcriptions as early as 1946. The network required that stringent quality standards be met before a transcribed program could air. ABC's Director of Recording, Lawrence Ruddell, described the process used to ensure the quality of the recorded programs:

> We frequently check on this by means of what we call the "AB" test: We get a number of listeners into a room and ask them to listen simply for the liveness and fidelity of the broadcast we are about to give them. Just outside that room, we station an engineer who switches several times from a "live" broadcast to a recorded version of the same show.[37]

Ruddell reported that in only a few cases were listeners able to tell the difference between the live and recorded versions.

In 1946, ABC, the youngest of the Big Three, broke the barrier for regular network carriage of transcribed programs. Up until then, only a few events of national importance had been recorded and rebroadcast on any network.[38] Bing Crosby, under contract to NBC, became interested in recording his programs in advance, allowing him time to pursue other interests. NBC's tight policy against recordings prevented him from doing this. ABC, however, had much to gain and little to lose by luring Crosby away from NBC and allowing him to transcribe his program in advance. But Crosby believed the most important reason for transcribing a show was so he could do a better show.

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[35] National Broadcasting Company, Minutes of the Control Board Meeting, 26 March 1935, item 786, NBC Collection, Division of Broadcasting and Recorded Sound, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Lawrence A. Ruddell, with Gunnar Asklund, "Miracles of Recording," Etude, October 1949, 23.

> By using tape I could do a thirty-five or forty-minute show, then edit it down to the twenty-six or twenty-seven minutes the program ran. In that way we could take out jokes, gags, or situations that didn't play well and finish with only the prime meat of the show; the solid stuff that played big. . . .
>
> . . . It gave us a chance to ad lib as much as we wanted, knowing that excess ad libbing could be sliced from the final product. If I made a mistake in singing a song or in the script, I could have some fun with it, then retain any of the fun that sounded amusing.[39]

The New York Times radio critic, Jack Gould, accurately forecasted, "Mr. Crosby has delivered a major if not fatal blow to the outworn and unrealistic prejudice against the recorded program."[40] Gould declared that he had enjoyed the transcribed Crosby program as much as he would have had it been live. He speculated that Crosby's defection alarmed broadcasters:

> CBS and NBC . . . fear that Mr. Crosby may be putting dangerous ideas in the heads of other stars who will want the time off that can come from using transcriptions. And if complete shows of topnotch caliber are recorded and the records shipped directly to stations, what, then, of the networks as such?[41]

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[38] President Franklin D. Roosevelt's radio broadcast after the Teheran conference and Roosevelt's funeral ceremonies are examples. ABC had also been experimenting with recording some of its news broadcasts.

[39] Bing Crosby, Call Me Lucky, with Pete Martin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 151-52.

[40] Jack Gould, "Portentous Premier," New York Times, 27 October 1946, sec. II, 9.

[41] Ibid.

One week later, however, citing the "increasingly metallic and fuzzy . . . reproduction of Bing's melodic contribution," Gould roundly criticized the Crosby show as the "season's major disappointment."[42] Apparently, the average listener did not share Gould's opinion. ABC told New Yorker that Crosby's ratings were about the same as they would have been for a live show, and varied according to the popularity of the guests.[43] Harrison B. Summers' compilation of network programs, however, indicated that Crosby's thirty-minute show received a 16.1 rating from Hooper, the ratings company, while other popular programs rated much higher. For instance, Fibber McGee and Molly drew a 30.2 rating, Bob Hope rated the same, and Charlie McCarthy brought in a 27.4.[44] It is unclear whether Crosby's ratings reflect the audience's lack of interest in the show's guests, or if the fact the show was recorded repelled audiences.

Mary Howard, a recording engineer, blamed the distortion of the discs Gould heard on the way they were played:

> Bing sings about as well as he ever did, and the recording is all right. It's the stations that play it wrong. The grooves in a record are cut at varying angles and depths with styli of varying sizes. Records have to be played back with corresponding needles set for corresponding angles and sizes to fit the grooves. Until radio stations learn that, these big, nighttime transcribed shows are going to flop.[45]

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[42] Jack Gould, "Ethereal Critique: Notes About Bing Crosby and Kate Smith," New York Times, 1 December 1946, sec. II, 11.

[43] "On Wax," New Yorker, 14 June 1947, 21.

[44] Harrison B. Summers, A Thirty-Year History of Programs Carried on National Radio Networks in the United States: 1926-1956 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Department of Speech, 1958), 141.

[45] "Perfectionist," 82.

The Crosby show aired on 208 ABC affiliates plus 192 other stations outside the network, for a total of 400 stations. Time reported that many of those stations were affiliates of other networks, indicating Crosby was still as popular as ever.[46]

Crosby's use of transcriptions did not precipitate the demise of quality at the major networks, but it did herald a new age of pre-recorded programming. The very next season ABC instituted a one-hour afternoon disc jockey program featuring Martin Block. Mutual did the same with band leader Paul Whiteman. Both programs had sponsors. The 1947-48 season saw four sustaining programs on Mutual using records, including "Kate Smith Sings," that interspersed records with live singing. ABC had a sustaining program in the 1949-50 season called "Milton Cross Opera Album" on Sunday afternoons. During the 1950-51 season NBC had a program called "Living 1951" which used taped interviews. It also had a disc jockey program called the "Wayne Howell Show," which aired Saturday afternoons.[47]

Transcriptions grew in popularity among broadcasters so that by the end of 1951, recordings made up more than half of the programming heard on the network stations in New York City. The programming of the network flagship stations mirrored a nationwide cost-cutting trend at other network O&O's and affiliate stations outside New York City.[48]

Advertiser Acceptance of Transcriptions

It did not take advertisers long to recognize the benefits of electrical transcriptions, and this acceptance may ultimately have fueled broadcasters' use of ETs. If an advertiser was willing to use transcriptions, and to pay the station to do so, what broadcaster would not accede? In fact, at least at the NBC O&Os, the broadcasters refused. Eventually, however, advertiser requests brought on the use of transcriptions.

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[46] "The Open End Game," Time, 28 April 1947, 67.

[47] Summers, Thirty-Year History of Programs, passim.

[48] "Half of AM Shows, Pop Music on Wax, Says Peatman Poll," Billboard, 8 December 1951, 12.

Advertisers used transcriptions in three ways. The first, called "spot" advertising, allowed an advertiser to record only the commercial and have it played at selected stations around the country. Advertisers recorded their messages rather than have an announcer broadcast them live over a network. By recording their commercials, advertisers gained more control over the quality and distribution of their commercials. Live network programs often contained commercial announcements recorded on transcription disc, which the local broadcaster inserted at the appropriate times. The discs, sent to selected stations, allowed an advertiser to deliver a more personalized message to each market. That way, for instance, national or regional advertisers could "use somebody that sounded more Southern" for Southern radio stations.[49] Similarly, Triangle Publications used ETs to introduce the Daily Telegraph, a West Coast newspaper. The company would have wasted money to advertise a regional paper over the national networks. To reach only the West Coast, Triangle transcribed the commercial announcements for use over fourteen California stations.[50]

The second method of using transcriptions involved sponsoring an entire program, such as the "Iron Fireman Military Parade." MacGregor & Sollie, another leading transcription company, recorded fifteen-minute programs for the Iron Fireman Company, which made coal heaters. One transcribed program featured the Columbia Band and Vocal Chorus on several musical numbers. The announcer began by introducing the program and the band, "Bringing to you by electrical transcription popular military band selections." Short pieces followed, interrupted twice with commercial announcements for the Iron Fireman Coal Flow Heater. Songs included "Hail to the Flag," "On Wisconsin," and "The Minnesota March."[51]

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[49] Julia C. Dunn, national advertising manager for WSFA, Montgomery, Alabama, 1946-1952, interview by author, 18 November 1990, Montgomery, Alabama, tape recording, personal collection.

[50] "Sponsors," Broadcasting, 1 October 1945, 60.

The third method was employed mostly by local advertisers. They could purchase individual spots in or sponsor a station-owned transcribed program. Frederic W. Ziv, president of the Frederic W. Ziv Company, credited the local advertisers more than Bing Crosby and more than the companies that produced quality transcribed programs with the acceptance of ETs. "They are impatient with the type of talent that might happen to be in their particular markets at that particular time," said Ziv. "They want big-time radio and they have learned that they can obtain big-time radio solely by means of electrical transcriptions."[52] Ziv revealed that "Boston Blackie," one of his company's programs, pulled ratings as high as 21.7, while Ronald Coleman's "Favorite Story Show" reached 17.5 in Los Angeles, beating out network shows on other stations.[53]

MacGregor & Sollie also provided complete sustaining programs, such as the "Olympian Quartet," featuring a vocal group by that name. The group sang several types of songs, including military songs, sentimental songs, and ballads. Barry Hopkins introduced the group and each song, and signed off at the end of the program. There were no commercial announcements, as the program was meant to fill gaps between commercial programs at a radio station.[54]

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[51] MacGregor and Sollie, "Iron Fireman Military Parade," electrical transcription, program number 3 (San Francisco: MacGregor and Sollie Recording Laboratories, undated), Division of Broadcasting and Recorded Sound, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[52] Frederic W. Ziv, "ET's Become Big Business," The 1949 Radio Annual, Jack Alicoate, ed. (New York: Radio Daily Corp., 1949), 57.

[53] Ibid.

Broadcasting's weekly feature called "Sponsors" listed what sponsors across the country were doing. A typical week listed the following sponsors and their transcription activities: A manufacturer of cuticle sets was planning a national campaign by ETs; the American Poultry Journal contracted with NBC's Radio Recording Division in Chicago to record 48 five-minute programs featuring Smilin' Ed McConell for thirty stations; the Ziv Company announced that several sponsors had signed for "The Old Corral," "Songs of Good Cheer," "The Korn Kobbers," and "Easy Aces"; station WWNC in Asheville, North Carolina, announced that Bon March Department Store had picked up three more fifteen-minute programs per week of Kenny Baker transcriptions and that a local clothing store had signed for a weekly half-hour program called "Playhouse Favorites," recorded by NBC.[55]

Transcriptions and World War II

World War II, through the Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS), contributed more to the development of radio broadcasting than will probably ever be known. The AFRS provided programming to the troops deployed during and after the war. Many of the programs the AFRS supplied were recorded from network feeds and "de-commercialized" for broadcast on military stations (see discussion of de-commercializing in the next section). Many other programs were assembled from previous recordings. Others were assembled from a combination of sources, including live performances. All of the programs were designed to improve the morale of the soldiers, sailors, and support personnel.

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[54] MacGregor and Sollie, "Olympian Quartet," electrical transcription, program number 1 (San Francisco: MacGregor and Sollie Recording Laboratories, undated), Division of Broadcasting and Recorded Sound, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[55] "Sponsors," 60.

Perhaps the best-known AFRS program, "Command Performance," consisted of popular radio artists singing and doing comedy routines. GIs were encouraged to write in and request their favorite songs and performers, hence the significance of the title. One episode, for instance, included actress Bette Davis, singer Marilyn Maxwell, comedian Jimmy Durante, and bandleader Artie Shaw. The guests read the names of the listeners who wrote in to request their appearances.[56]

Another program, "Jubilee," was geared more toward black troops and personnel than most of the other programs. "Jubilee" featured primarily black performers. Jimmie Lunceford, the King Cole Trio, and Dolores Williams made up a typical program. The show concentrated on the music of these performers, but the artists did talk between numbers.[57]

Some of the programs worked around a similar theme each week. For instance, the comedy series "GI Journal" revolved around a newspaper and showcased different artists in each episode. It highlighted the musical and comedic performances of its guests. One week, glutted with big stars, included Lucille Ball, Mr. Rochester, singer Connie Haines, Bob Hope, Mel Blanc, and Arthur Treacher. Although supporters of transcriptions claimed perfection could be achieved, this particular episode contained actors flubbing their lines, background coughing, and unscripted giggling. These minor flaws only added to the charm of the program.[58] "Command Performance," "Jubilee," and "GI Journal" were all-original programs using live performers.

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[56] Ed Jenkins, interview by author, 22 November 1992, Colorado Springs, Colorado, tape recording, personal collection; AFRS, "Command Performance," electrical transcription, series H, no. 124, undated, Division of Broadcasting and Recorded Sound, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[57] AFRS, "Jubilee," electrical transcription, series H-11, no. 29, undated, Division of Broadcasting and Recorded Sound, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The AFRS attempted to copy the popular disc jockey programs through one of its dubbed programs, "GI Jive." The program used records of popular music and announcers who acted like stiff DJs: their diction was as precise as network announcers, but their comments were not as spontaneous as civilian disc jockeys. Although they tried to give the appearance of being "cool" or "with it," their jokes sounded stiff. The musical selections, culled from popular jazz records, included numbers from the bands of Glenn Miller, Jimmy Lunceford, Tommy Dorsey, and Vincent Lopez. The fidelity of the recording made it possible to tell when the announcer stopped talking and the records began, but the sound quality did not diminish significantly. The only difference during the record was a slightly audible hiss.[59]

Bing Crosby's influence on network acceptance of transcriptions has already been portrayed, but Theodore Stuart DeLay offered some insight into the influences on Crosby himself. DeLay quoted an AFRS "Command Performance" writer as saying that Bing Crosby was strongly influenced to record his shows by working on "Command Performance." That writer later used his AFRS experience to write and produce Crosby's program on ABC.[60]

Magnetic Tape

After World War II, magnetic tape took the place of the disc. The tape recorder retained all the conveniences of the discs and eliminated most of the difficulties, including cost. Network quality tape recorders cost around $700 in 1949 while the same quality transcription systems cost upward of $2,000.[61] The superior fidelity of tape, the longer recording time, the ability to reuse the tape, and the ease of editing expedited the switch from disc to tape. While it could be done, editing a program on disc was difficult at best,

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[58] AFRS, "GI Journal," electrical transcription, series H-19, no. 92, undated, Division of Broadcasting and Recorded Sound, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[59] AFRS, "GI Jive," electrical transcription, series SS, no. 268, undated, Division of Broadcasting and Recorded Sound, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[60] Cited in Theodore Stuart DeLay, Jr., "An Historical Study of the Armed Forces Radio Service to 1946" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1951), 674-75.

> requiring the simultaneous operation of several play-back turntables, the operator switching from one to the other, at the required moment, and synthesizing the result into a single new recording. This obviously requires much skill and experience on the part of the operator to avoid program gaps or clipping of syllables.[62]

Ed Jenkins served as a recording engineer for the (AFRS) in Los Angeles. He remembered transcribing national network programs to send to overseas military bases and short-wave radio stations. Those programs had to be "de-commercialized" before they reached the service people so the government would not appear to be endorsing any products on the military radio stations. For instance, "Fred Waring's Chesterfield Show" could not use the name of the sponsor, "Chesterfield"; so the AFRS engineers had to edit it out. The studio received a network feed to record the live programs on transcription discs. In the original network version of the program, listeners heard the theme song start, then the announcer say, "It's the Fred Waring Chesterfield Show." In order to edit out the word "Chesterfield" and not leave an obvious gap, the AFRS studio had another turntable running with the theme song playing. The engineers started that turntable at the instant the network started the theme song. When the announcer said "Chesterfield," the engineers would turn off the channel with the network program just long enough for the word to pass, and then turn it back on for the word "Show." Meanwhile, the record of the theme song played in the blank space, creating the illusion that nothing was really missing. The end result of this elaborate effort reached the servicemen as "It's the Fred Waring . . . Show!"[63]

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[61] Ruddell, 23.

[62] Butler, "Techniques of Sound Recording," 30.

Editing tape, in comparison, was extremely easy. All an engineer had to do was cut out the offending part with a pair of scissors and tape the ends back together. In 1948, ABC installed magnetic tape recording equipment to record sixteen-plus hours of programming each day.[64] Lawrence Ruddell recalled an incident when the New Year's Day Sugar Bowl conflicted with the Metropolitan Opera's regular Saturday broadcast. On this occasion, the network decided to record the Met's performance of Lucia di Lammermoor and broadcast it the following afternoon. The famous soprano in the starring role broke badly on an E-flat during the mad scene. Fortunately, because the program was on tape, the engineers had time to cut out the bad E-flat and replace it with an E-flat the soprano had sung in an entirely different opera ABC happened to have recorded on tape. Ruddell continued,

> The story has an amusing aftermath! A gentleman who was present in the opera house and heard the break, thought it would be funny to invite some friends to his home the following afternoon and laugh at the cracked E-flat. The friends came, the broadcast began, the time came for the Mad Scene–and the host sat forward in his chair, waiting for the fun to start. What he heard was a perfect and notable rendition! The fun started, sure enough, but it boomeranged against him.[65]

Russell Lynes reported another instance of tape's convenience to Harper's Magazine readers. He visited Nicholas Mazur, an ABC tape recording engineer, and observed some editing in progress:

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[63] Jenkins, interview.

[64] Byron H. Spiers, "ABC Uses Magnetic Tape for Delayed Broadcasts," Radio and Television News, April 1950, 41.

[65] Ruddell, "Miracles of Recording," 52.

> Once I watched him patch together a joint that left two words too close together. He looked through other pieces of speech by the same person until he found an "unh," the monosyllabic sound of pause for breath, then dubbed the "unh" and inserted it between the two ends to smooth out the rhythm. "That," he said, as the new recording was run through in its perfection, "is known as 'lifting an "unh."' "[66]

Bing Crosby stated in 1953 that almost everyone was using tape by that time.[67] The swing toward recorded programming was just gaining momentum, though. The perfection of magnetic tape in the late 1940s sealed the fate of live radio.

Conclusion

Regardless of the fact that the many people scorned transcriptions, these recordings had an enormous effect on the radio industry. Electrical transcriptions made possible many hours of quality programming for small stations. They allowed advertisers to circumvent the broadcasting networks, targeting their audiences more effectively and economically. Perhaps, though, the most important change they forced in the broadcasting industry was the pre-recording of programs for editing and timely playback. When Jack Gould of the New York Times predicted that Bing Crosby had "sparked a revolution" in radio,[68] he was absolutely right. Transcribing, and later taping, network programs became standard practice as more and more stars demanded the flexibility recording allowed. Transcriptions also pointed the way to radio's continued success after the introduction of television. With increased recording fidelity and the acceptance of recordings by audiences, radio broadcasters found it easier to use phonograph records and compete with television after the stars deserted radio for the glowing screen.

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[66] Mr. Harper [Russell Lynes], "Lifting an 'Unh,' " Harper's Magazine, August 1951, 95.

[67] Crosby, Call Me Lucky, 153.

[68] Gould, "Portentous Premier," 9.

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